Links in My Life on Land and Sea

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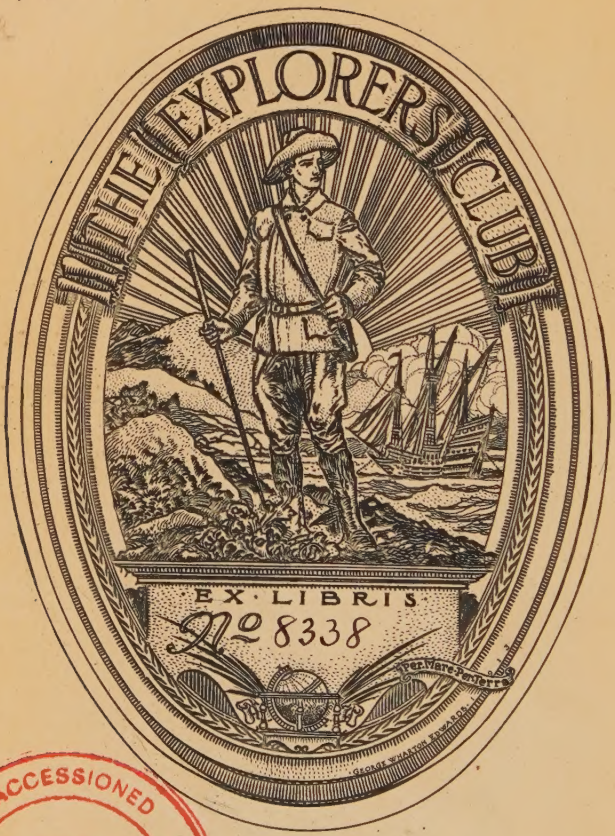

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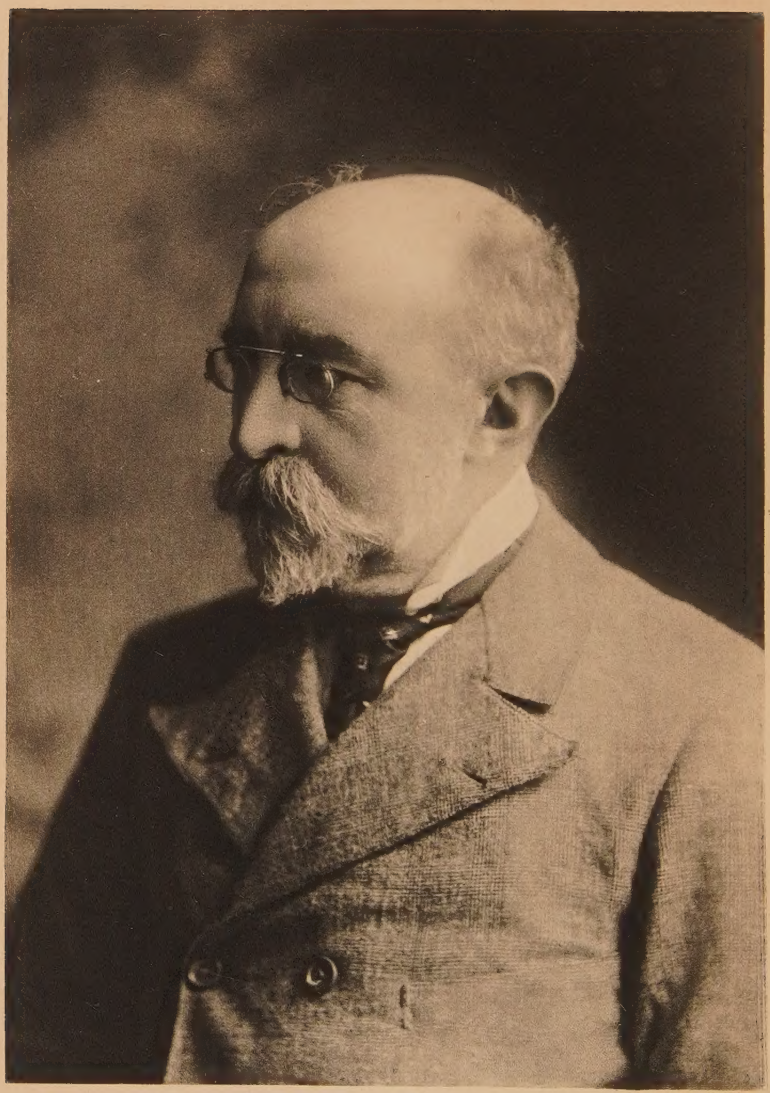

Jas W Cambier

LINKS IN MY LIFE ON LAND AND SEA

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LINKS IN MY LIFE ON LAND AND SEA

BY

J. W. GAMBIER

COMMANDER ROYAL NAVY

"*Olim meminisse juvabit*"

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1906

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Preface

IN presenting this loosely-linked chain of events in my life I must crave the indulgence of readers and critics if errors, either topographical or in the sequence of events, occur; for beyond the dry bones of my Navy log—bones so dry that even in a vision Ezekiel could not clothe them with flesh—I have nothing but memory to fall back on.

My memory is, moreover, of the ordinary type, and, though quite up to the average, it is by no means equally good all through. Scenery is indelibly impressed on it, and as I sit and write I have but to close my eyes and any spot on earth that I have ever visited rises up with almost photographic accuracy and with all its local colour. Faces, too, come to me almost as luminously—even those of casual fellow-travellers—so much so that I have come to believe in some process of cerebral photography by which sensitive brain plates reproduce an image, in a chance *rencontre*, maybe half a century later. But for many important facts, names, and dates, I have been compelled frequently to refer to old shipmates, and even to casual acquaintances, to get them right, and, in such cases, it is quite probable I have not entirely succeeded. I have also briefly given

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the first years of my boyhood—not that I think them of general interest, but for the reason I give in my opening lines. Our destinies for all time and to all eternity shape themselves early. Morals and manners must be sown, like spring wheat.

I am indebted to the courtesy of the *Times*, *Nineteenth Century*, and *Fortnightly Review* for permission to make extracts from my writings in their respective columns.

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BOYHOOD

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AS the earliest records of any life are the light by which we read its progress and end, I may be pardoned for briefly recording my own. The most important fact in it, as far as I am concerned, and of far-reaching consequence to others, occurred on June 16, 1841, when, at the Villa Attias, near Leghorn—my father being British Chaplain at that place—I first saw light.

The earliest impression I can evoke is that of Italian sunshine, and I have been a worshipper of Baal ever since—in the sense that sunshine is life to me, whilst gloomy weather becomes often almost insupportable. A tent in the desert, an onion and a handful of dates, have more attraction for me than a palace in Park Lane—simply and solely because, at least, in the first I should see the beloved sun. This instinct has continued in me throughout my life.

The first concise memory I can evoke from the past is seeing our man cook—who we called "Il Gobbo," as he

was hump-backed—writhing on the road outside our villa with a knife sticking in his ribs; a man running away up the road, my father after him, who, however, did not catch him and was soon out-distanced. But as to the quickly gathered crowd of onlookers no one seemed the least concerned—no others joined in the pursuit—for to stab a man in Italy, then as now, was not considered a very outrageous proceeding, notably in this self-same city of Leghorn, where it is well known that at least five or six assassinations take place daily at the present time without any one being brought to book.

Nor does the resemblance between Italy of the last century and Italy of to-day cease there. This murderer of our cook escaped to his native town, Orvieto, but returned after a little to Leghorn—became a smuggler and corn merchant, rose to wealth and to a seat in the congenial atmosphere of the municipality.

I had many brothers and sisters, and the first language we all spoke was Italian, which I have never forgotten. To my infantine acquaintance with this language I owed the knowledge that there was a man called Plowden—an Englishman of family—hiding in our attic until my father could smuggle him out of the country. For he had killed another man, by name Crooke, in a duel at the Bagni di Lucca, about a Mrs. Norton *née* Onslow. I overheard my father telling my mother about this.

When I was between four and five we migrated to Boulogne-sur-Mer, but travelling leisurely with long halts —like the Children of Israel—our Sinais, Bonn, on the Rhine and Brussels, with many minor halts at numbers of other places. For we travelled in our own carriages, crossing the length and breadth of Europe, all across Tuscany and the Plains of Lombardy, over the Splügen and so down through Switzerland, in itself a pleasant record of a bygone system of journey.

At Bonn I remember seeing Queen Victoria for the first time. She had come up the Rhine for a Beethoven Festival in a yacht called the *Fairy*. Some unfortunate little German princeling did something to offend her and she made herself extremely disagreeable, but how, beyond the fact, I cannot remember. At Brussels the seriousness of life began for us boys in the shape of lessons with my father—an accomplished scholar, but an austere pedagogue. I think it was having a very small income and a family of ten children which soured him in early days. In his old days he was gentleness and kindness itself. Then, too, my mother was always weak with us and indulged us in everything; and that must have been trying. In these lessons I outstripped all my brothers in everything that was ornamental and useless, for I assimilated Latin and Greek as easily as bread and milk. Drawing, too, came naturally to me, and languages, the last not by patient study, for I never could apply myself to studying anything in the true sense of the word, but by aptitude for mimicry of sound and for lingual gymnastics.

At Brussels I saw another sight, something analogous to the death of Il Gobbo. My brother George and I were looking out of our window—which gave on the boulevard, watching a terrific thunderstorm, memorable ever since in Belgian annals, as it did infinite harm all over the land and smashed part of St. Gudule, the cathedral—when we saw a man and woman make for shelter under a tree. Suddenly a blinding flash of lightning swept along amongst the trees, and when we could see again, there were the man and woman lying huddled together on the ground in a weird, contorted embrace, whilst beside them sat and howled, quite unhurt, a poor little mongrel dog. It was two or three hours before the dead were removed.

I remember the Field of Waterloo and a blue-nosed old

fraud—a local guide—who swore he was at the battle. But, after all, why should lying be a guide's prerogative? He was but the forerunner of the nation's official liars, who, some years after this, erected the Belgian memorial to record that Belgians won this great victory. And now there is a German one going up, but that will astonish no one!

We left Brussels and went to Boulogne, where we were very happy as children and used to boat on the River Lianne. The ribs of the large, flat-bottomed barges which Napoleon had collected there for the invasion of England were still to be seen under the water at a place called Pont-de-Briques. We were in Boulogne during the Revolution of 1848, and stirring times they were for us boys, for, from our lofty attic windows, we bombarded the gathering mob below with anything we could lay hold of—bits of mortar picked out from under the tiles, and even our own toys and our sisters' dolls. Then some rough looked up, and pointing us out to his friends, they rushed at our *porte cochère* and began climbing up on the window-sills of the ground-floor, when, fortunately for us, a diversion occurred by some Gardes Mobiles coming round the corner and opening fire on the rabble, when instantly all bolted except four or five who lay dead on the pavement, and a few who staggered away, wounded. But the streets still remained in the hands of the mob for many days; we, barricaded in our house, where—but for the assistance of an old glazier, Monsieur Guillain, who lived opposite and drew a fair income from my father in the repair of windows which we boys broke—we might have suffered other discomforts of a siege, namely hunger. But old Guillain smuggled food in by night. This lasted about a week.

About this time a man called Higgins appeared above our horizon. My father always believed him to be a

natural son of his old friend MacCready, the famous actor. Later in life this same Higgins blossomed into Bellew, the popular preacher and reciter. He married my aunt Eva, my mother's sister, who ran away from him and married Sir Ashley Eden, when Governor-General of Bengal.

Higgins certainly bore a striking likeness to MacCready —so much so, that on the occasion of his first visit to us, our old French manservant, who had not caught the name, in answer to my father's question as to who it was who wanted to see him, said, "Je crois que ça doit être un fils de Monsieur Mercredi"! Mercredi being the nearest shot Antoine could make at the name of my father's old friend, the actor.

At this time my two eldest brothers were sent to Eton, but it did them no harm, for in those days Eton boys were still boys—fought out their quarrels with their fists, as became gentlemen, instead of calling each other names or cutting each other, as they do now. I believe that a boy who fights nowadays is considered a "cad." When I was a boy it was the cads who did not. The only unsound note—an echo from Eton—I can recall in these two dearly loved brothers of mine was that they thought any boy at any other school was a kind of social pariah. As to myself and my younger brothers who, later on, went to Cheltenham, we were quite out of the pale: "Chaps one could hardly be seen speaking to." It was our red-tasselled "mortar-boards" that were the especial ridicule of my brothers.

But to return to Boulogne. The Revolution over, and things quieting down, Louis Napoleon visited the place as President of the new Republic. We saw him frequently in the street processions, his flabby, pasty face, large, thick nose, and mean, "squinney" eyes impressing themselves distinctly on my memory. Then we saw him again (1853)

when once more he visited Boulogne, this time with his new wife, Eugénie. I presented her with a bouquet of flowers, and wondered how he had married an Englishwoman. It is curious I thought this; for there is little doubt there is not a drop of any other than Scotch and English blood in her veins. However, that history has yet to be written.

Again, a third time, I saw the Emperor at Chislehurst —in 1872, I think—a broken-down old man, stooping terribly, his complexion a ghastly, greenish-white, his cheeks puffy, his nose more prominent than ever, his eyes sunken and withered. A most pathetic spectacle: and what an end! He died shortly after—unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

Boulogne society was very pleasant in those days, consisting chiefly of "hard-ups" of good family, with a very fair sprinkling of social rips. But they all had good manners, and the *convénances* of good breeding were strictly observed. We came into the first category, for it behoved my father to live as economically as possible in order to educate and launch his seven sons.

We all learnt to talk French fluently—Boulogne French, it is true—but in due time the *patois* got weeded out, and I suppose we talked the pure language as well as it was necessary.

* * * * *

So time rolled on, and we migrated to Ashley Lodge, Leckhampton, close to Cheltenham, which place my father bought with a view to sending the rest of his boys to Cheltenham College. I went first, and did no good there, for I learnt practically nothing that was of the slightest use. I already knew quite enough Latin and Greek for any career short of that at a University; for I could read both easily, and was familiar with many of the best authors. I may incidentally mention that I could

read and translate the Greek Testament before I was eight. I hated Cheltenham College with all my soul from the day I went there, for it was only a bad form of private school, nothing generous about it—the boys kicked and cuffed by any brute of an usher—Drivers, we called them—or by the boarding-house master. The drivers were instructed to spy on us always. We were locked into the playground, where there was no shelter of any kind, and if a boy felt ill, or not inclined to play, he had to hang about until the driver mustered his lot, and marched them—two and two, like French boys at a *Lycée* —to the boarding-house.

At most of the boarding-houses the food was bad, and bullying universal. Our Head-master, Close, was a pompous old humbug—at least we boys thought so—spoke thickly through his hooked nose, and flogged us with great dignity. The school was governed by a fussy Board of Control, the Vicar of Cheltenham being, I believe, *ex-officio* chairman. The Head Master, and other old washerwomen of his type, were the rest of the Board.

My friends at the school were James Robertson, late Head Master of Haileybury, a great Alpine climber, and a most erudite, accomplished man, with Baker Russell, the well-known cavalry general, and many others who have made their mark in life. Amongst my school-fellows was an extraordinary monster, who shall be nameless—a missing link; about 4 ft. 6 in. high, with a lean neck, a flat skull covered with bristles, which continued like a hog's down the nape of his neck, arms abnormally long and immensely strong, covered with hair, legs about a foot long and useless for locomotion, but, being supported by bands of steel and ingeniously contrived springs, enabled him to make a series of baboon-like leaps. A protruding brow overhung cruel, twinkling eyes, and large nostrils lay flat back, showing red inside.

He could wrinkle his forehead and twitch his ears after the fashion of an angry cat. No boy in the school could lick him—in fact, only once did any one really try it, and that was I believe, Machell, cock of the school for a long time, and afterwards a well-known racing man—who wished to punish this brute for some exceptional piece of cruelty. But "Monkey," as the monster was called, was too much for him, getting him into his tremendous arms, rolling him on the ground, seizing in his teeth one ear, which he nearly wrenched off, and attempting to gouge out one of his eyes with his powerful claws. Fortunately a gatekeeper and some drivers were at hand, who, rushing in, managed to rescue Machell just in time. After this "Monkey" became an actual terror to the whole school, his malignity and cruelty growing greater as time went on. Strange to say, this hideous atavism of some remote anthropoid ape had, it was reported, a very beautiful sister.

After the freedom and *sans gêne* of Boulogne, with its delightful children's parties—to which we were carried in Sedan chairs—we children found the respectability of Cheltenham most irksome. I do not think any one of us ever liked the place. Nor were my parents any better off—they had no sympathy with the ultra-Evangelical clique who cowered under the moral lash of the priggish vicar; nor did they care a straw about the value of the rupee, the two all-absorbing matters of interest to nine out of ten of the inhabitants of that town. However, I knew very little about all this, and cared less, for I had been only a short time at school when, to my unspeakable delight, an old friend and connection of the family, Admiral Robert Lambert Baynes, offered to take me to sea with him, he having just got command of the Flying Squadron, destined for service in the Baltic in the Russian War.

Never shall I forget the wild delight with which I received this news when coming home one day from school, more disgusted with it than ever—having been licked in a very unfair fight by a boy called Gethin—my father met me outside the door, and told me about this change in my destiny. The revulsion of feeling was almost too great for me. I can recall to this day the emotion it caused me. It was Murad V. dragged from a dungeon to mount the Ottoman throne. The life for which I had always pined since scrambling about the rigging of dirty little English colliers in Boulogne harbour, was to be mine. Farewell to the hated "play"-ground; farewell to my yellow-faced, beak-nosed class-master; to all the rigmarole of Second Aorists and Greek gerunds—those hideous nightmares of my boy-life—all to be left behind for ever, and in exchange that career which had been the time-honoured pursuit of my family.

But now came the crucial test of my education, which had been conducted by my classic father and the pedants of Cheltenham College precisely as it is to this day in all public schools. Naturally it proved that I was ignorant of anything of the least practical use; with one exception, however. In the curriculum for passing into the Navy the Pundits who ordain these things had stuffed a quantity of Bible lore. Here I was all right, for I could reel off whole chapters and psalms by the fathom. But I had to learn up the elements of arithmetic and some history, and had only five or six weeks to do it in, so—my father being ill—my mother carried me off to a Southsea crammer, whose father had been sailing-master to my uncle, Lord Gambier. But I only stayed there one night. For, out of consideration of this family association, when bedtime came they put me into a room where I saw two little boys, with very red faces, already in bed, who at once informed me that one of them was just recovering from

scarlet fever, and the other was at that moment suffering from that disease.

But there was no help for it, so I went to bed. Next morning, however, my mother returned to the school to borrow some money to get home with, for her pocket had been picked—she had an extraordinary affinity for pick-pockets, many in Cheltenham supporting families on this idiosyncrasy of hers—and, of course, she promptly removed me, not without words between her and the master. Fortunately my mother bethought herself of my father's cousin, Admiral Fitzgerald Gambier, the founder of the Sailors' Home at Portsmouth, and by his recommendation I was handed over to the Rev. Thomas Knight, Vicar of St. Mary's, Portsmouth, who did the cramming right merrily; so that before I had been there a month I did not know if I was standing on my head or my heels, could eat little or nothing, and lay awake half the night trying to do a simple equation.

Well I remember his preliminary examination of me, to see what I knew, and where to begin. I hated the idea of showing off, and would not let him know that I could read the Odyssey and the Iliad, so I began with an ode of that bibulous old Pagan Anacreon, in which, in spite of his desire to sing about such heroes as Atreus and Cadmon, nothing but love of women would come into his thoughts. I do not think Mr. Knight understood a word of it, but he understood fast enough that I knew nothing of the least use for the Navy, and actually wrote to my father, saying it was ten thousand pities not to send me to a University, adding, "He might become anything in that kind of career."

There was no *Britannia*, or other training ship, in those days, and immediately we passed we were pitchforked into our ships. If the medical examination had not been a farce, of course I should never have got into the Service,

for I was so short-sighted that I knew no one across a dinner-table. But the examining doctor, a beetle-browed, frowsy old Scotchman, satisfied himself in respect of our sight by spreading out his fingers within about ten inches of our noses. Then he jammed a finger alternately into each ear and, roaring in the other, asked if we could hear. I said I could hear quite plainly. After this he banged each boy separately in the back, and then, producing from a cupboard a thing like a fog-horn, listened to our breathing. Finally he started us all racing round the room and skipping over the backs of chairs—an amusing spectacle —all of us naked as we were born. That ended the examination, and we were pronounced fit to serve the Queen.

My uniform, or some of it, was already prepared and I went home for a few days, of course extremely proud of myself, and the admiration of even my Eton brothers. I pass over the final *adieux*, which, boy-like, I naturally made light of. But it was sadder than I knew, for we never met again, some of us—my eldest brother, two years later, falling at Delhi; my eldest sister disappearing in the massacre of Cawnpore. I do say disappearing advisedly, for it is very generally believed in India that all the unhappy women who vanished in that frightful scene were not killed, and that many were carried off to Indian zenanas. There is reason to suppose my sister suffered this fate, for two separate people of our acquaintance said that in a carriage belonging to some Rajah, being driven rapidly along, they saw a lady, whom they believed to be her, peer out, pull down her veil, and wave her hand in a despairing manner. It may be asked how she never contrived to communicate with the outer world, but those who know India are aware of the inviolability of the Purdah. Moreover, she may have had reasons of her own for never wishing to return; as my brother-in-law married again in a few years.

CHAPTER II

I GO TO SEA

H.M.S. *Retribution*—Baltic Flying Squadron—Confused impressions—Bilge-water tea—Weevils and cockroaches—Boatswain and skipper—Cobbings—French mids and their ways—Hamburg—Our acquaintances lodged in gaol—Sail drill and sailormen—The sea person of to-day.

MY father accompanied me to Portsmouth, where I was to join the *Retribution*, a paddle-wheel frigate and probably the second best fighting ship afloat in her day. With a preliminary visit to my outfitter to take possession of my chest, which we took with us, we embarked in a wherry on the Hard and were soon at Spithead and alongside my ship, with Rear-Admiral Baynes's blue flag at the mizzen and the Flying Squadron moored in line of column.

Neither the Admiral—whom I had seen at home—nor the Captain were on board, so that my father failed to see either of them, as he had wished to do; but the Flag-Lieutenant, Lambert, nephew of the Admiral, who had presented himself when we came over the side, was very attentive, and introduced me to Swinton, our senior mate—as sub-lieutenants were called in the pre-Germanising days. A kind good friend and an excellent mess-mate was Swinton all the days we were together. My father did not remain long on board, and

it was with more emotion than I had ever seen him betray—for he veiled a warm heart under an armour of reserve—that he stuffed a five-pound note into my hand, and an envelope containing a prayer which he had carefully prepared for my use in this new life. Being a man of the world, however, he said nothing of the preachifying order; but merely hoped I would always remember I was a gentleman and try to lead a clean life. He also said, somewhat sententiously, "As you will never borrow, so you need never lend," in which he was dead wrong, for I frequently did both.

The first clear impression I have retained of that inaugural moment of my being alone in the world is that of two small boys in the same uniform as myself—the one a wizened little person like a marmoset monkey, the other a lean, long-legged lad with light hair and the face of an ostrich—standing laughing at me on the other side of the deck, as I turned from the gangway over which my father had just disappeared. I suppose the eye-glass in my eye gave me a conceited air, and certainly it was not a usual appendage for a child of thirteen; but as I had worn it for the last four years I was quite unconscious that it struck any one as comical.

I can distinctly call to mind how dazed and confused I felt as I looked about me, for I had never seen a ship of war before, and had not the least conception of what it would be like. I look back on it now, and a picture rises up of confused sights and sounds; broad white decks and rows of guns: masts and rigging: big funnels belching out smoke: men tramping about: bugle calls: officers in a medley of stripes and different uniforms: marines, of whose very existence I was up to that time ignorant: movement everywhere, people rushing up and down ladders apparently bent on nothing

in particular. I see myself a half-blind mite of a boy suddenly swept into the grip of this extraordinary machine, a mere speck, as it were, amongst these hundreds of men, listening to a jargon—consisting chiefly of oaths—of a sort I had never heard.

Then the two lads cross over from the other side of the deck and are kind and friendly enough. I look on them as quite old salts, for one has been on board a whole month, and the other a week and both seem to me perfectly at home with everything.

"Come along down with us into the berth," says one of them; "the midshipman's berth," he explains.

"I say," says the other, "I don't think I'd keep that glass in my eye if I were you. It looks so rummy."

I explain I cannot see where to put my feet without it, which they think "rummier" still, and lead the way below.

With unaccustomed steps I get down to the main deck; rows of great guns before me, lanterns of horn slung from the beams overhead in which gutter tallow candles giving a feeble yellow light; down still lower, to a dark hole, stinking of pitch, bilge water, cockroaches, mouldy biscuits, damp clothes, and tarpaulins, where long lines of white-washed sea-chests stand in front of rows of muskets and cutlasses; into a pokey kind of den, measuring twelve feet long by five feet wide, the entire centre occupied by a table on which is spread a cloth, which may once have been white. I see going on what I suppose to be some kind of meal, for there are cups and saucers of great thickness, bread, and bowls of slithery yellow butter, whilst, sitting on the lockers, jammed close together round the table, are my future messmates, some fourteen or fifteen in number, of all shapes and sizes, including the Assistant Surgeon, ranging from children of my own age to men of five

and twenty. From the centre of a massive beam overhead swings an oil lamp, smelling horrible, whilst two tallow dips, stuck into bottles, help the illumination as best they can. A queer, pot-bellied little man in his shirt sleeves stands at the door at one end of the den pouring out a black fluid which smells of boiled clothes, but is in reality "ship's tea," and rightly so called, for on no place on God's shore could such a decoction be found. All hands are eating and drinking in the utmost haste: the stale bread and the cart grease which does duty for butter rapidly vanishing, washed down by the aforesaid tea, to which an addition has been made of sky blue milk, poured out of a beer bottle, and of the coarsest of brown sugar. I can remember, as if it were yesterday, how my heart sank at the whole scene as I realised that this was the life I was to lead henceforth for Heaven knew how long! And yet, in a week's time, I was perfectly happy amidst it all; thinking it as natural as breathing to fish up dead cockroaches from the bottom of my cup, or to knock weevils out of my biscuit.

But to return to my first day on board. My messmates seemed jolly enough, and took very little notice of me beyond asking my name, whilst after tea some of them showed me where my chest stood, and produced a marine, who, I was informed, would be my servant, and would look after me. I went on deck again; the shades of night were deepening over the waters of Spithead, and, as I peered out over the side, I saw the lights of Portsmouth on one side, and those of the Isle of Wight on the other, seeming to suggest that henceforth my home was to be on the sea. All manner of thoughts arose in my boyish mind. How far off seemed Ashley Lodge! I wondered if any living being in the whole world had ever been so lonely! I wondered if any one at home was thinking of me and understanding the sort of

life into which I had been suddenly launched. Then I looked aloft. The vast size of the masts and yards—accustomed as I was hitherto only to the colliers, in Boulogne harbour, or French fishing boats—seemed to stagger me. A stiff breeze was whistling through the rigging, the ship lying broadside on to the wind in the strong current, and I was conscious of a distinct rolling of the vessel, for there was a heavy sea—for Spithead—and the white crests of short steep waves glittered in the light from the main deck ports.

A dazed memory of my first night in a hammock may be accounted for by the fact that I had not been long in it—having got there with much difficulty—when I found myself with my head under one of the arm-racks, and my heels on the lid of a chest, some amusing person having treated me to the ordinary joke played on newcomers, of cutting down my hammock. I felt very foolish: with a lump on the back of my head, and a marine sentry quietly chuckling as I lay on the deck, so that I thought the whole thing anything but pleasant. However, with the aid of the sentry, my hammock was soon in its place, and I myself once more in it, where sleep, which rarely deserts the young, soon caused me to forget all my troubles.

I awoke very early next morning, with an impression that thunder was going on apparently only a few inches above my nose, and, much puzzled, I turned out and looked up the hatchway. In the gloom I discerned rows of blue-jackets on their knees, rubbing the sanded decks with a soft white stone in each hand, whilst Swinton—who was mate of the main deck—with bare feet and trousers tucked up, stood superintending the operation. I dressed and went on to the upper deck, where the same thing was going on, and wandering about amongst buckets, swabs, and squeegees, finally found myself on the forecastle,

where a queer old man with bow legs and a bad limp, a red face and ginger whiskers, seemed to me as if he ought to command a fleet from the deference paid him by the crew. However, autocrat as he was, he smiled at me so kindly that I thought whoever he might be, I would have a yarn with him, so, ranging up alongside, I began a conversation about things in general and the prospects of the campaign before us in the Baltic in particular. I was struck with the freedom with which he gave his opinion to a boy of my years and humble rank, especially when he said that "old Napier"—the Commander-in-Chief in the Baltic in 1854, the year before—"was an old humbug and could never do nothing but jaw!"

We got on swimmingly together, and I saw in him the ideal old sea-dog of Marryatt, being particularly impressed by the horniness of his hands and the toughness of his toes, for he kicked heavy buckets about as easily as I could a woolly ball.

As daylight crept on I had time to study his face and saw what a singular way he had of squinting over the bridge of his nose, looking out for squalls I thought, as if they might come from anywhere, even up the hatchway. I also observed that one side of his face was bulged out by a permanent gumboil, which however seemed to occasion him no discomfort beyond causing him, from time to time, to eject into any handy bucket a brown fluid from between his teeth, with an accuracy of aim that was amazing. I mentioned my admiration of his skill in discharging this liquid, when he laughed uproariously and requested some one, undefined, to "Damn his toplights," and then lugging out of his mouth a juicy-looking brown ball, explained to me the mystery of a quid.

By this time the holystoning was over and "washing down" began, so I left my friend and went below to wash and dress; with a candle burning in a bracket in

the lid of my chest. This operation performed I went on deck again where everything in the meantime had been put in order, with officers of all ranks walking up and down on the port side—that which a landsman would call the left if he was facing forward—but, in solitary state, on the starboard side, my friend of the morning, his legs looking still more bandy, indeed one leg appearing to be broken at the knee, making him roll along like a cart with a broken axle. I noticed that he was now much better dressed than he had been earlier, with more gold lace on his cuffs, a broad gold band round his cap, and that he had no quid in his cheek. He seemed to stare at me rather oddly as I came on deck, my glass in my eye, but again I imagined that he smiled, so I thought that I, at least, would not be such a snob as to cut him, as all the officers seemed to be doing by not even walking his side of the deck, seeing he had been so friendly to me only a few hours before. So screwing my glass tighter into my eye I ranged up to him and said encouragingly, "Hulloa, where's your quid?"

To my surprise he stopped dead short, stared at me for a moment with a freezing aspect, and then beckoned to an officer—who sprang forward and saluted him without saying a word—and said severely, "Here, Mr. Knott, take this youngster away and teach him manners!"

Then I was seized and hustled off, and learnt that I had muddled up that almighty potentate, the Captain of the ship, with the boatswain, the latter being the person with whom I had talked in the morning. But what made matters worse for me was the fact that the two men were so exceedingly alike, both redhaired, both with one leg broken, that this same mistake had been made before by landsmen and other persons not versed in the mysteries of naval uniform, so that, unintentionally, I had repeated a particularly riling kind of blunder. However, my next

interview with Captain Thomas Fisher showed me that he bore me no malice, indeed he was too much of a gentleman to be capable of bearing ill will to any one.

Soon after breakfast—to me a revelation of discomfort—I received a message to go to the Admiral's cabin, where the tall, thin old man, who I had seen at home in *mufti*, but now wearing an extraordinary glazed top hat, like a coachman's, with a stripe of gold lace up the side of it, and a tight buttoned-up frock coat, proved to be Admiral Baynes. He received me most kindly, whilst Captain Fisher, who was also present, said many kind things, and seemed totally to have forgotten the incident of the morning. Lambert, the Flag-Lieutenant, was also there and undertook to explain to me my duties, and to teach me how to keep my log—the dullest, most meaningless compilation known to mankind, still existing to this day in all its crass and boundless absurdity; one which the wit of man has never been able to connect with anything that could be of the remotest use to any one.

It is not my intention to write a history of the Naval War of 1854-55, for the present generation have long ceased to take an interest in the matter. Moreover, the less said about what the Navy then did, or rather failed to do, the better.

My messmates and my relationship with them were naturally my first pre-occupation, and amongst the things that dawned on me was that the less I ventilated Latin and Greek at sea the better. For this fact was forcibly borne in on me at an early stage, our second master—who had joined the Navy straight out of a merchant ship—inconsequently boxing my ears because I was reading a Greek Testament, which my father had given me requesting that I would read it occasionally, with the double-barrelled object of keeping up my classics, and my interest in Holy Writ.

"We don't want none of this here kind of hogwash at sea," said my friend. I also quickly discovered that to know anything about music—beyond being able to sing a comic song or play a hornpipe on a tin whistle—was likewise an offence; whilst the crowning infamy was to be able to talk French, or any foreign tongue.

All these disqualifications I unfortunately possessed, which led to early efforts on my part at being a humbug, when, to save the application of a sea-boot to my back, I would adopt, with much difficulty, sea pronunciation of some classic name for ship or star; as, for instance, "Imperoose" (Impérieuse); "Sanspareel" (Sanspareil); Alpha Pegāsi, and so on, through a long list of shuddering false quantities.

My knowledge of French, however, I could not hide under a bushel, for the Admiral knew I spoke it well, and took me about with him wherever it was necessary. In those days to speak any foreign language was thought phenomenal in the Navy—not to say discreditable—like long hair and the keeping of tame rabbits.

My messmates were, of course, a very mixed lot—social poles apart—sons of the first families in the land, and others of the very humblest origin. Not that there was much snobbery amongst us; for, though officially the line of demarcation between executives and civilians was rigidly observed, still in a mess a lad took his standing through his own qualities. Airs of superiority or caddishness were very soon kicked out of any boy betraying them.

In those days there was a time-honoured institution in the midshipman's mess called "Cobbing." It was the punishment meted out to youngsters for any kind of offence, and consisted in being laid across a desk, on the top of a table, and being whacked with a bayonet scabbard. But only our own "cloth" could cob us,

so there was no indignity attached to the operation. It was merely meant to hurt, and this it did effectually. A fair amount of attention was paid to the morals of the youngsters, though by a singular law, which no one disputed, at a certain period the line between that which was permitted and that which was not, was abruptly broken down. Up to a certain age you went ashore in charge of some oldster, who looked after you all day, put you into the boat returning to the ship at five or six in the evening, and then himself, perhaps only two or three years your senior, went on the spree until the small hours of the morning. I do not think there was any privilege youngsters longed for more than that of being their own master ashore, and it was rebellion against restraint in this that earned me my first cobbing.

The Fleet was at Kiel—the French Squadron lying near us—and I had leave to go ashore, but accompanied by a mate called Toup Nicolas. We met some French midshipmen, and I chummed up with them, and, giving Nicolas the slip, went off with these boys. Together we visited all sorts of places which their native instincts easily enabled them to discover. But though our outing was perfectly harmless, I received four dozen with the bayonet scabbard that evening. However, next day we had leave given us to visit Hamburg, and I went with another "oldster," but whether it was that through the distance being greater from the ship or that he thought the punishment I had had the day before entitled me to a little freedom, I do not know, but we had a really good time, and wound up with a grand dinner in a *café*, where several German ladies, who had no husbands or brothers with them, were most kind, insisting on kissing us youngsters, and even the aforesaid "oldster" too, who, old sea-dog as he was, smirked, and smacked his lips as

if he liked it, though affecting—for our benefit—great indignation.

Coming away from the *café* we had trouble with some men who had followed us about for two or three hours—with what object I never understood—and it was the first real "row" I was ever in, and I certainly thought it excellent fun; my messmates knocking over the flabby Germans like ninepins, so that in a few minutes our assailants fled, and we found our way back to our hotel, all the damage our party had sustained being one black-eye, one head cut open with a stick, and myself with a big lump on my shin from a kick. On our way back we again encountered the ladies who had been so kind to us, but escorted by some half-dozen policemen. We youngsters were quite distressed at the indignity, but it was explained that, in Germany, when people come in from the country and have no hotel to go to, the police take care of them until the morning. I remember suggesting we might take them to our hotel, but the others thought it better not; so we parted, calling out to the ladies, "Aufwiedersehen!" which made the policemen laugh.

Fleets, in those days, were continually exercised in making and shortening sail, shifting spars, and all similar manœuvres aloft, and as the greatest rivalry existed amongst the crews as to which ship should carry out some evolution first, accidents were frequent; in fact, hardly a drill-day passed without two or three men being seriously injured. And naturally the foreign fleets endeavoured to compete with the British, in a friendly way; though, without prejudice, I can honestly say with no success, and certainly with more accidents below and aloft. Once, drilling in Kiel harbour, being aloft, I saw an unfortunate French midshipman go head first from the mizzen cross-trees of the French flag-ship

—the *Villeneuve*—and flatten out into a mere heap on the ship's poop. There is no sound more sickening than the thud of a man as he strikes the deck when falling from aloft.

But that numbers of accidents should arise in sail-drill is not astonishing when one thinks that masts and spars, measuring perhaps seventy or eighty feet long, and weighing two to three tons, are whisked about with bewildering speed with nothing but men's hands and brains to guide them; hundreds of men crammed into a space of a few hundred feet, where nothing but the most marvellous organisation and discipline can avert death, on deck or aloft. To the landsman who understands nothing of the difficulty involved in rapidly shifting these great masts and yards, or in reefing and furling thousands of square yards of stiff canvas—perhaps wet or half-frozen—the rapidity with which it is done is, perhaps, the chief wonder in his mind, but to us, who know, it is admiration for the discipline and nerve which it all means. For ropes, running like lightning through blocks that are instantly too hot to touch from friction, have to be checked to within a few inches, requiring the utmost coolness and presence of mind, whilst the officer in command has to superintend what to the uninitiated looks like a tangled maze of cordage, which, however, is in reality no more in confusion than threads flying through a loom. In an instant this officer may see something going wrong; to delay a single second means a terrible catastrophe; for every one—aloft and on deck—is relying absolutely on his judgment.

"Belay!" "Ease away!"

Some order comes in an instant; the boatswains' mates repeat the order in a particular call which this life-and-death necessity soon teaches every one to understand, their shrill whistles rising above the din of tramping feet

and running ropes, or the thundering crash of the great sails in the wind. Death has been averted, or perhaps not; if the latter, you look up and see some unfortunate man turning head over heels in the air. Your heart stands still. Will he catch hold of something, even if only to break the fall, or will he be smashed to pieces on the deck or across a gun? It is a mere toss-up. If he is killed outright it generally stops the drill for the day. If he is only very seriously injured it will go on; for this, too, is part of the lesson to be learnt, that in peace, as in war, you must take your chance.

People ask what it is that makes the character of a naval man. I believe it is this kind of thing, danger of some kind constantly faced, until it becomes second nature; this tremendous discipline which knows no relaxation; this invincible belief in doing their best, and over and above all, the tradition of the noblest service the world has ever known. In the modern Navy, of course, all this drill aloft no longer exists, and substitutes for exercising the men have to be adopted to keep them healthy; but exercise as they like, the extraordinary springiness of the old man-of-war's man is no longer to be seen, for nowadays all look alike, whether stoker or seaman. Nor has the disappearance of "masts and yards" merely affected the appearance of the men. Indirectly it has altered the entire service from top to bottom; for now a boy may be turned into an engineer or an executive, or a paymaster, at any time and apparently be equally fit for all jobs on board except those of surgeon and parson, and these, too, he may soon accomplish if we have many more changes at the Admiralty. The modern naval officer need not in the least be a seaman; he is a man who goes to sea: an item in a great fighting machine, which neither the winds nor the waves greatly affect. He would be quite as good a sailor if his ship

could get about ashore, and, for lack of waves, run up and down Primrose Hill, to teach him not to be sea-sick. But in spite of all this, I believe the modern naval officer to be better instructed all round than we were in the fifties, with the solitary exception of "sailorising."

CHAPTER III.

THE BALTIC

Bloodless campaign—Skating under fire—Sweden and revelry—A Governor and his bath—A night in a forest and a drunken fiddler—Our devil-dodger—Sorrows of a midshipman—Short commons—Copenhagen—Nondescript attire—Boat accident in the ice—Return to England.

THE Baltic Campaign, as far as the *Retribution* was concerned, was marked by no incident of real war, for we never fired a shot in anger. For a time we lay blockading Revel, where something might have been done, but was not, and as the frost had not disappeared we used to land on a flat, sandy island, where was a small lake, on which we skated. This practice, however, was observed by the Russians, and as the island was within range of the forts they would sometimes open fire on the place, and frequently round shot came crashing through the pine forest, and *ricochet* over the ice high into the air. But as long as we kept on the inner side, towards the Russian forts, we were protected by the bank of the lake, and could continue our diversion undisturbed.

This was the nearest approach to being under fire that nine-tenths of the fleet encountered during that inglorious campaign. One British Admiral, it is true, did manage to get his eye knocked out, but it was by the premature explosion of a submarine mine which had been picked up,

and brought on board his ship. Also we had cholera in the fleet, losing a great many men, *ennuie* predisposing them to take the infection. For, after Revel, we lay swinging at our moorings blockading Cronstadt in concert with a huge French fleet, week after week, with nothing resembling war in its fighting sense being done.

The Commander-in-Chief was Admiral Dundas, but as his exploits did not exceed those of his predecessor, Admiral Napier, they can be of no interest to any one, and beyond a feeble, half-hearted attack on Sweaborg, nothing was again attempted. In the opinion of many competent persons, naval and military, St. Petersbourg should have been the objective of the war. For Cronstadt could have been captured the year before, being completely unprepared for attack had it been attempted immediately after the ice left the passage clear.

It is not easy to estimate the demoralising effect of this kind of war on the Navy, for certainly, as far as we personally were concerned, we were only too glad to exchange this inactivity off Cronstadt for our pleasure trip to the coast of Sweden; its fiddling and dancing bringing us quite as much honour and glory as squinting through telescopes for movements amongst the Russian Fleet which never took place, or capturing a few poor Finn fishermen, whom we dignified by the name of prisoners, and who revenged themselves on us by filling the ship with vermin.

At last, to our relief, we were detached from the main fleet and went on a pleasure cruise to the coast of Sweden. Amongst places we visited was———, where the Governor, a pleasant old gentleman with a fiery red face, and a wife with red-gold hair, some thirty years younger than himself, entertained us royally. All the notables of the district, and their womenfolk, were invited to meet the Admiral and our officers at a banquet

given by the Governor, but being looked on as a mere child I was not provided with a special lady to take in, so found myself, to my great delight, seated next to our hostess. There was a charming gaiety in the lady, and as our Admiral, who sat on the other side of her, could speak neither French nor German, I came in for most of her conversation. After dinner there was a ball, and, small boy as I was, I danced several times with my hostess. Meanwhile her jovial old husband had been pledging all and sundry in bumpers of champagne, and towards three in the morning insisted in going on board the *Retribution* with some of the officers. He went upstairs to make some change in his attire, but, failing to return, the boat left without him. After the last of the guests were gone, his wife began to look everywhere for him, but nowhere was he to be seen. She hunted high and low, until looking into a bath-room near her room, she saw her husband, still in full dress, lying full length in the bath asleep. There was no water in the bath, and as it was useless trying to rouse him, she left him there. The idea is that he thought he was in a boat going off to the ship. I give this yarn on general report, but quite believe it was true.

We next went to Hüdicksval, far in the north of the Gulf of Bothnia, where again I came in for kindness; this time from the wife of the Mayor, a stout, motherly woman, with six or eight children, all exactly like her round-faced self. She was, moreover, a learned person, and told me strange Northern tales, giving me my first taste for a literature I have always liked since: the myths of early Scandinavia, sagas, eddas, and the Havamal, the sayings of Odin. She gave me a book I have unfortunately lost and never been able to replace, chiefly because I have forgotten its proper name. It was a translation of some ancient work supposed to have been written in Iceland in

the ninth century, relating to the adventures of the god Hemial, who, disguising himself as Rig, became the father of the three different sorts of men, free, churls, and thralls.

But I did not spend all my time in getting Norse instruction, for the eldest girl, aged fourteen or fifteen, spoke French fairly well and could read English, so I had no difficulty in getting on with her. She was a most active young person, thick-set, skin like snow, blazing red cheeks, and straw-coloured hair, which hung down in a thick plait below her waist—also thick. She could climb a tree like a squirrel and loved wood-life, knowing the calls of all birds and cries of animals, most of which she could imitate perfectly, deceiving even owls, which I believe is by no means easy. But I have seen three or four at a time come flying through the wood in response to her call. She knew the *habitat* of most things that flew: long-legged cranes in the meres, willow ptarmigan amongst the small birch-trees, eider duck in the shallows, and she pointed out to me a swan, which, she said, had no voice. She also showed me nests of hawks, gyrfalcons, and other birds of prey.

During our stay amongst these hospitable people we organised entertainments of divers sorts, dances ashore and afloat, picnics, and excursions into the interior. Amongst these diversions one came nearly to ending my life. It was in this wise. We midshipmen had landed in considerable force and had gone up to a big farm just beyond the landing-place, with the intention of getting up a dance. There was no difficulty in this, for the farmer soon collected a number of young people, chiefly girls, and cleared his hall-kitchen for dancing. On a previous occasion we had had the services of an old Swedish fiddler, but on inquiring for this musician, we learnt with dismay that he had retired to his own

village, about six or eight miles off through the forest, and it was thought impossible to get him so late in the evening.

The alternative was to send on board for our ship's fiddler, but we doubted if we should obtain permission to have him, as he invariably got drunk immediately he got ashore, and, though he could play better drunk than sober, still it was subversive of discipline to have him returning to the ship tipsy oftener than was absolutely necessary.

In this dilemma I volunteered to fetch the native fiddler, for no man of the country would go, saying the road was not safe. Finally I got a small two-wheeled cart and a pony, and persuaded a small boy, who was supposed to know the way through the forest, to go with me. We were soon *en route*, the evening bitterly cold, and myself with no top-coat or gloves, so that in ten minutes after starting I hardly knew if I had any hands and feet. The rough track, winding through pine woods and marshes, was quite dark, but the sky showed above it. Fortunately there was only one road in that direction, and as there was no room for the horse to turn round he had to keep his head straight. He went like the wind, and it was difficult to keep one's place on the sliding-board, which did duty for a seat. Well under the hour we saw a twinkling light ahead, which turned out to be the house to which we were bound. I banged for a long time at the door, for the fiddler was already in bed, and, as it turned out, not more than half sober. However, his wife—who might have been his grandmother—insisted on his getting up, after I had offered her a British half-crown, which I had brought as his fee. In fact at sight of this the good woman fished out bread, milk, and cold porridge, no

doubt thinking that I was greatly overpaying the man for his services. So, with much grumbling on his part, his wife and I, with no regard for *les convénances*, crammed him into his clothes, wrapped him up in a wolfskin coat, put his fiddle-case into the cart, and hoisted him in after it.

By this time he was comparatively sober, and had become sufficiently intelligent to be able to arrange with his wife that the boy should stay with her until his return, there being no room for him in the cart. The boy seemed quite content, and everybody being satisfied, off we started on the road back. But if the pony had gone like a gale of wind before, now it was a typhoon. We seemed to be flying over the ground, bounding from one lump of earth to another, the tackle, with which he was lashed to the cart, creaking and straining like a main truss in a hurricane, my companion, down in the bottom of the cart, clinging to both sides of it like death to a dead nigger. As the pony had a mouth like a ringbolt, I could not have pulled him up if I had wished to, and I was so terribly cold that I did not care what happened as long as the gear held on. On we flew through the pitch-black night, but though I could see nothing but a faint glimmer overhead, apparently the pony could, and kept to the track.

Suddenly, in our wild flight, I was conscious of a tremendous shock, and then of finding myself whirling through the air to land face downwards in about two feet of mud and water. Half stunned I scrambled up, wet through, and having dropped my eyeglass, could literally see nothing around me, whilst the only sound was that of a horse's feet dying away in the forest.

I groped with my feet in the water until I found firmer ground under me, and then felt about with my hands for the cart and fiddler. I found him lying on his back, the

cart on the top of him, and, for a moment, had a great fear that he was killed, for he lay quite still. But remembering the special care of Providence for men half-drunk, I felt easier in my mind, and, with an effort, got the cart off him and hauled him out. He was none the worse, and fright had sobered him, though he seemed dazed. I shook him up, and he whined out something in Swedish, and began feeling about in the mud for his fiddle. The touch of the case, which he soon found intact, awakened his mind. He opened it, took out the fiddle, felt it all over and put it back in the case, and then lay down again hugging it. I got angry with him and tried to make him understand that I wanted to get back to the farm, but all he did was to raise himself up on all fours, with the fiddle-case held in his teeth by the handle, in which attitude he seemed inclined to continue our journey.

But as nothing would induce him to alter this mode of progression, I left him and tried to find the road for myself. For I was so cold that I knew if I did not move quickly I should be numbed, whilst, as he had on a thick coat, he might safely be left to weather out the night in the woods. I now began to distinguish things a little better, but it would have been difficult for me to have found my way even by daylight. I stumbled along and, having entirely lost the track, found myself in more open country, low willows, growing in shallow pools, and belts of birch. But the wind was so cold in these opens that I wished myself back in the woods again.

Then, as I stumbled on, I began to think of bears and wolves, for I knew there were plenty of both in the country, as their skins were to be seen everywhere, and I looked at the trees and wondered if I should be able to climb them if these animals should turn up. After I had wandered along for hours—it seemed to me—I became

so tired that I did not much care what happened, and made up my mind to sit down, bears or no bears, and wait for daylight. It must have now been about eleven or twelve o'clock and the moon was rising, low down, with a feeble light. I sat down on a log and, wishing the fiddler and every one else at the bottom of the Gulf of Bothnia, thought what a fool I had been to volunteer for this risky job which every one else had shirked. I had a vision of the jolly farmhouse, of the huge fireplace and burning logs, of the buxom girls in their short skirts and red stockings, skipping about with my messmates, whilst I was sitting like a drowned rat in a gloomy forest, with a fair chance of being snapped up by a wolf or a dozen of them. Moreover, I was desperately hungry, and thought of the smoked reindeer meat, and of hot rum and pipes of tobacco.

I must have got up several times and have stumbled on, when I sat down for the last time under the lee of some stacks of wood, cut ready for carting, a sign of civilisation, which, though slight in itself, was somehow cheering as I knew that I could not be altogether out of human tracks. I tried to keep awake, but I soon went to sleep, and slept peacefully until awakened by a touch on my shoulder, which, for all I knew, might have been the paw of a bear. Then a bright light from a lantern shone in my eyes, two men were standing in front of me, who lifted me to my feet and helped me off in the direction of the farm, which we did not reach until after two in the morning.

I learnt afterwards that the pony had galloped straight home, his broken trace-ropes explaining his arrival without the cart, and that the farmer's people had at once set out with lanterns to look for us. The old fiddler, who had continued his journey on all fours, they found in half an hour's time. He had not strayed from the track. But when by some extraordinary piece of luck they found me,

I was five or six miles in the wrong direction, and heading for a part of the country entirely uninhabited.

* * * * *

As the cold weather set in, and the Gulf of Bothnia began to freeze over, the Flying Squadron receded farther south. In the Southern Baltic, however, the weather continued fairly mild, almost up to December, in fact not much colder than it would have been in England at the same time of year.

We visited Stockholm, or rather the outlying islands, but as I was undergoing that pleasant state of incarceration known as "having my leave jammed," I missed all the festivities that went on. I cannot remember what precise crime against naval discipline I had committed, but I know that to me especially—ever fond of seeing new things and new people, with that vagabond instinct which has been my inheritance from my cradle—this state of affairs was a peculiarly irksome punishment. Nothing in the world is easier for a midshipman than to incur this penalty, for the Service lurks with pitfalls for youngsters. It seems to the average youngster that captains, first lieutenants, and naval instructors spend their whole time in laying snares for him. It is impossible to foresee, from hour to hour, what may not be a crime, for everything that every one else does wrong is the fault of the midshipman of the watch, which handicaps a person who is tolerably certain to be doing wrong things on his own account. A speck of dirt here, a broom hidden in a place where no broom should be—it is his fault; a man spits from the main-top—it is the fault of the midshipman aloft. The captain or first lieutenant is kept waiting the fiftieth part of a minute for anything he may require—his boat, a signal-book, or anything else—it is the fault of some midshipman. A midshipman's life consists almost entirely of three things,

skipping up and down ladders, scheming to get ashore, and humbugging the devil-dodger. Nothing but the inexhaustible spirits of boyhood could stand the strain. He is placed at the bottom of a ladder, on every rung of which above him stands some one in authority, so that he cannot jump on any one, whereas every one can jump on to him with the greatest ease. His first years are literally a struggle for existence, for in most midshipmen's berths—a term, however, now obsolete, for all midshipmen's messes are dignified nowadays by the misnomer of gun-room — there is not nearly enough room for the members of the mess to sit at table, and a small boy comes off badly in the general scramble. Furthermore, he is almost invariably hungry, but of this I will give details later on in my sailing-frigate days.

As I have hinted before, our education was entirely neglected, or was subordinated to performing duties which could have been done better by petty-officers. In those days—whatever it may be now—not six officers in the Fleet could have given an intelligent account of what the Russian War was about, and could no more have described the British Constitution than the Philosophy of the Stoics. We went from one country to another, absolutely ignorant of even the names of the kings who came on board to visit the ship, and as to any appreciation of race, languages, religions, or customs of these lands, it was of less interest to us than what was inside a shark cruising along under the ship's bottom.

As to privacy in a midshipman's life, or a single moment to himself, that was, of course, out of the question. From half-past six in the morning—when he was roused out by his hammock-man and his bed forcibly removed to the hammock nettings—until he turned in again at nine or ten, he was in close contact with other

human beings. His day was one incessant round of duty, school, gun-drill, and boat work, with interludes of rough and tumble in the berth. The only concentrated effort of his mind, which never deserted it for a moment, was how to get ashore; the one never-failing topic of absorbing interest, the sprees that were past; the hope—transcending every other—that sprees were ahead.

The parson is, of course, an important appendage to the life of a midshipman, but, as far as we of the *Retribution* were concerned, our devil-dodger counted for very little and never taught me individually anything worth a row of pins. However, it is only fair to say that some of his pupils profited by his instructions in mathematics, of which he knew a fair amount, notably Paddy Fitzgerald, later on a well-known Admiral and a very distinguished man.

Again, on the other hand, I must say we saw a good deal of life, and came first hand on human nature. For the quest of the spree made us acquainted with a class of people more or less unconventional and primitive. Not that we sought them by choice, but we had to take what we could get, or rather what we could pay for. For £66 a year—pay £16; private allowance £50; mulcted of £5 a year for the parson, leaving £61 for all and every expense, including messing and, in my case, my clothes as well—was not an income on which one could go much into society. If a midshipman could land with one shilling in his pocket he thought himself well off. Hundreds of times have I gone ashore and missed my dinner and my tea, and wandered about until night time without one penny in my pocket. Still, hunger and thirst and weariness were preferable to going on board and voluntarily surrendering a single moment of one's freedom.

There was, however, a delightful *camaraderie* amongst

the *Retribution* mids, and if any one of us had a shilling and he met two others, that shilling had to provide for the amusement of all three. And even a mid cannot get wild revelry out of fourpence!

What excellent company we were!—lighthearted, reckless, indifferent to all law and order on shore abroad, with supreme contempt for all foreigners, from kings to gendarmes. The smallest fishing village on some almost desert Baltic Islands, wind swept and bare, or the crowded slums of Kiel, Copenhagen or Hamburg, all alike were made to contribute something to amuse us, even at the risk of having to fight our way back to the beach and the sea, our home.

I remember affairs of this kind on which I now look back with amazement, not so much from the boldness of their conception as from the difficulty and danger of their execution; all kinds of tumults, retreats, ambuscades, engaged in for sheer love of riot and devilry. Doubtless it was the outcry of our nature, seeking relief from the grinding discipline of our lives afloat, and not mere wanton or senseless folly. It is quite impossible for any one who has not been a midshipman—or a convict—to understand the delight of temporary relaxation from discipline. No doubt we were frequently very foolish; still, give me the boy who seeks diversion with others in such folly rather than he who slinks off alone, no one knowing where he has gone or what he is doing.

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As the Baltic froze, the line-of-battle ships and heavy frigates left for England, but the Flying Squadron remained on until exit from the Russian ports was no longer possible. I have a vivid recollection of the misery we suffered from cold between decks, for no kind of provision had been made for this practically Arctic portion of the campaign.

Our get-up became most motley, designs of coat or cut of collar varying to suit our individual fancy. The Admiral's tall top-hat had now a shiny oilskin cover over it, like a cabman's; the Skipper lurched about in a pea-jacket, which hitched up over his quarter-galleries as he rammed his hands down into the pockets of his pilot-cloth trousers; the First Lieutenant, with a hood, which, coming over his ears, made him look like a brother of the Misericordia; our marine officer in what was known as a purser's coat, a shapeless, woolly contrivance, supplied for the use of bluejackets, bellying out at the foot like a balloon; the master in yellow oilskins and a huge blue comforter; with many other fancy costumes, which looked as if they had been picked up in a rag-and-bone shop in Ratcliffe Highway. As to footgear, some were in big sea-boots—as worn by fishermen; some in shiny indiarubber half-boots; some in shooting boots or the homely galoshe. In those days there was so much latitude allowed as to uniform in bad weather that it required discrimination to tell a post-captain from a coal-heaver unless he began swearing, and even then it was sometimes difficult. Nowadays sumptuary laws are rigidly enforced, and rightly too.

Moving south we reached Copenhagen, and were most hospitably received, though I myself discovered that what had long since been forgotten in England still rankled in the memory of the Danes; namely, the seizure of the Danish Fleet in 1808 by my uncle—eighteen sail of the line, fifteen frigates, six brigs, twenty-five gunboats—3,500 guns in all, and brought them home to England.

I was looked on with curiosity by many old persons in Copenhagen as the great-nephew of the man who had been employed to deal this masterly blow on their country and forestalled their treasonable and secret design

to aid Napoleon in crushing our country, my name being apparently familiar with almost all classes of society, and that not in a flattering way. There was a great simplicity in the Danish Court; and as to the Danes what struck us most was the resemblance in manners and ideas that they bore to our own people.

A number of us came very near losing our lives one night in Copenhagen Harbour, landing—for a ball—in a ten-oared cutter in which eight officers in addition to the crew of eleven bluejackets were seated. It was blowing hard, dead on shore, and as we stood farther in and got from under the lee of the island, which forms a breakwater for the harbour, we found ourselves followed by a choppy, dangerous sea, curling up astern of our deeply-laden boat in an alarming manner. We were under sail; it was very dark, and large sheets of ice, several inches thick, were an additional danger, as our boat might easily have run up on to one or have been stove in at any moment. We staggered on, however, under a reefed foresail, with only the lights of the town ahead to guide us, when, suddenly, an extra big sea rolled up, caught us on the quarter, and nearly threw us on our beam ends with the lee gunwale under water. This was bad enough, but the peril was increased ten times by some of the officers on the weather side—who jumped up to get away from the water which was deluging their full-dress coats and trousers—being pitched across the boat on to the knees of those to leeward. The foot of the sail was full of water, but luckily the bluejacket in charge of the sheet let it fly. If he had been a landsman of course his sheet would have been foul. The man at the haulyards also let go, and the sail fell into the sea; half the boat's crew threw themselves to windward, and the boat, though up to the thwarts in water, righted. In a few moments the mast

was down, the oars were out, and her head brought round to the sea, her stern only a few inches out of water. In this condition we let her drift, stern first, towards the edge of the broad belt of broken ice which the wind had driven in shore, the outer fringe loose and the inner beginning to pack. With great difficulty we managed to get through this floe, and even then could not find an open water-channel into the landing-place. So, finally, we got alongside of what we felt was solid ice, and, scrambling out, wet through to our knees with the sea-water freezing our trousers stiff, we managed to land on the quay, but in sorry plight for a ball. But, determined not to be done out of our dance, we went to a hotel, turned in whilst our things were dried, and then on to the ball, making the best of it. It was about as near a thing as you could wish, for certainly very few of us could have reached the land, huddled up as we were in thick coats and wrappers, in a heavy sea and ice floating about.

Soon after this orders came for us to return to England, the only man-of-war remaining in those frozen seas, except ourselves, being a small corvette, the *Harrier*, which joined us from farther north, a mass of ice.

CHAPTER IV

SHEERNESS

North Sea gales—Christmas Eve—Home again—"The Lofts,' Sheerness Dockyard—A ball—Chased by footpads—Dockyard "mateys"—Dockyard plunder.

WE sailed for England on the 19th of December, and, coming in for heavy gales in the North Sea, reached the Nore on Christmas Eve, when all who could be spared got leave and hurried off home.

It was late at night on Christmas Eve when I reached Ashley Lodge, and great was the rejoicing, as may be imagined. The nine months I had been away had altered many things, perhaps more in myself than in any member of our family. I stood on my own feet already, with some experience of life and adventures to relate.

I had a short and merry time at home, and then went back to my ship at Sheerness, lying in the basin, the officers and crew being turned over to "The Lofts"—now dignified by the name of Naval Barracks—a great improvement on ship life to all of us, and feeling like being half on leave. Nevertheless, that the Dockyard was still the quarter-deck, may be instanced by the fact that one of our midshipmen, Bevan by name, had his leave stopped for having his hands in his pockets, just as he was starting to go to a ball near Enfield, given by a daughter of the well-known sea-novelist,

Marryatt. It was an ill wind, however, which blew me good, for he asked me to go in his stead. So I got leave, and taking his ticket, reached his aunt's house in plenty of time. She, however, was not going to the ball, but had arranged for a neighbour to take me in their carriage, which, however, already contained six girls when it came to our door, so that I found it a matter of some difficulty to crawl in anywhere. But a very small space sufficed for me, though I could only find sitting room on the carriage mat for fear of crushing their crinolines, where, however, as it was a bitterly cold night, I was comfortable enough, and indeed thought the three miles' drive rather short. It reminded me—only with a difference—of going to children's parties at Boulogne, five or six in a sedan chair. The dance was a particularly lively affair, but naturally in those mid-Victorian days there was none of that rushing about of six or eight men with their arms linked in the Lancers, knocking women over, stamping, shouting, whistling, singing, which makes a modern ball so refined an entertainment. Our pleasures were circumscribed by decorous manners and we had to rely on being able to dance well, or to talk to our partners without telling them *risqué*, stories, which would, of course, be very dull and stupid nowadays, and would come especially hard on modern youth. The ball over, to my disgust, I found that Bevan's aunt had made other dispositions for my return, for the cosiness of the landau had ripened into friendship as the night went on, especially with one of that tight-packed party and myself. But now I was to go back in a brougham with two old ladies of sour and forbidding aspect. This so annoyed me that I said I would rather walk, declaring that I liked walking by moonlight. So the old ladies drove off and left me to my own devices.

My road lay almost straight, and I went off at a

dog-trot. About three quarters of a mile from Miss Bevan's house—where the road passed through a thick dark wood—a man sprang suddenly from the roadside and made a grab at me, catching my coat by the cuff. Fortunately I twisted myself out of his grasp and made a bolt for it, he following and swearing he would do all manner of things if I did not stop, and keeping close to my heels for a considerable distance. But as I was a fairly fast runner I kept ahead of him. As we cleared the wood I heard him blow a whistle, when, to my dismay, another man, bounding over the hedge, joined in the chase gaining rapidly on me, as he was quite fresh, and I was blown. I had just made up my mind to stop and give them up my watch and what money I had, when I ran plump into the arms of a third man, standing in the shadow of a tree. But it was a policeman; and, in a moment, the men after me stopped, and bolted up the hill again. The policeman, however, did not follow, and learning whither I was bound, escorted me to the house. A fat, sleepy old butler, Mr. Partridge, was waiting to let me in, and when I narrated my adventure appeared greatly concerned, not for me, but for himself, for it showed him that the risk of being garrotted in this road was certainly great. He was right; for garrotting was in full swing throughout England at the time, and only the "Cat" put it down.

I returned next day to my ship and endeavoured to cheer Bevan up by telling him what a delightful time I had had, and giving him a full and particular account of the tightly-stowed drive in the landau. "Ah!" he said. "Yes, I know those girls well."

Sheerness in those days—and I have never heard of any improvement in it since—was about the most deadly hole in Christendom, with no means of getting away from it except by an occasional tug-boat up the Medway to

Chatham, or by intercepting some small steamer passing up the Thames. Immediately outside the Dockyard gates began the town, a collection of squalid, miserable houses and shanties, for the most part occupied by the families of Dockyard hands; by marine-store dealers, whose dealings were almost exclusively in property stolen in the Dockyard; by bargee families; and, of course, tap and beer-house keepers. The whole atmosphere of the place was demoralising, for though practically all Government property and its very existence depending on the Dockyard, vice was permitted to flaunt—I believe that is the proper expression for that kind of thing—unchecked. And if this moral atmosphere was depressing, what can be said of the physical aspect of the country? A long, treeless road over a half-sodden plain intersected by deep ditches of brackish water led to Sittingbourne, the nearest town, a walk entirely repellent and uninteresting, which no one would take for pleasure, Sittingbourne itself only an enlarged Sheerness.

Thus we youngsters—from sheer force of *ennuie* all those weary months from Christmas to March—were literally driven to playing every manner of idiotic prank that came into our heads, or that practised ingenuity for mischief could invent. Moreover, as out of wise consideration for our morals we were hardly ever allowed to leave the Dockyard, it is obvious that the yard had to produce the raw material, and this, in the nature of things, could only be the men employed in the yard.

Therefore, all our tricks were at the expense of the Dockyard "Mateys," who, as their badgering by midshipmen is of immemorial antiquity, look on ships' youngsters as their natural enemy. Needless to say the Government system of employing literally hundreds of men more than would be required in a private yard, left these mateys with hours and hours of idleness on their hands, leaving

the field open for assault by their watchful enemy. 'For at any time of day, in any corner of the yard, we could always find two or three sound asleep, probably half-drunk, or waking up to go and get drunk. This was our opportunity. We would mix all their tools up in different baskets, or, if they were incapably drunk, would lash their legs together, or their necks to a ring-bolt; pour water over them; bury them under canvas if we found them in a sail-loft; lock them up in cabins; take away the ladder if they were at work in the hold of a ship; in short, anything that could be devised to annoy them. It was very silly, no doubt, but it made us laugh, and we were very hard up for something to amuse us.

The theft of Government stores from dockyards, though carried on impartially everywhere else, had been reduced to an exact science in Sheerness Yard; but the difficulty in dealing with the matter was that no one could draw the line as to what was theft, and what was "legitimate perks." It would have puzzled the unjust steward to see the difference between the higher officials—superintendents, harbour-masters, and such like—loading up carts with tables, chairs, wardrobes, and other items of household furniture, made with Government materials by Government paid labour, and despatching them to their private houses, and the Dockyard matey or police-man who passed through the gates, to the shop of the marine-store dealer, with their caps and pockets stuffed full of brass screws and Government tools, or their stomachs three times their natural size by reason of yards upon yards of bunting—more costly than silk—wrapped round them. But where the officials excelled in Sheerness was in the dimensions of things they stole, for it was discovered that thousands of highly valuable logs of timber, for making masts and yards, had disappeared out of the basins. This went on for years before it was discovered

But it was the same in every Government dockyard, and may be still, for all I know, for there are still colossal frauds in most Government Offices, and though the only ones I can now vouch for were in the War Office, yet I do not believe they are less in the Navy than in other departments. It is, however, fairly certain that officers in the Navy are nowadays not concerned in these things, but in the constructing and shipbuilding departments the commission business still goes on wholesale.

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After three weary months of Sheerness, we once more hoisted the Admiral's flag and found ourselves at Spithead, where we swung round our moorings for two months, Admiral Baynes finally leaving us. Early in May we sailed, in company with H.M.S. *Rodney*, for the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER V

MOROCCO AND THE CRIMEA

Morocco and Riff pirates—Attack on Melilla—Safe fighting—Reckless Moorish courage—Sail for the Crimea—First glimpse of Constantinople—Desert Sebastopol—The Valley of Death—Treasure trove—Balaclava—A mother of many—Mary Magdalene—A fight in a shanty—Equine dilemma—Touch and go of being left behind—England again—Leave the *Retribution*—Appointed to a sailing frigate.

ON our arrival at Gibraltar we received news of the crew of a British merchantman being held prisoners by the Riffs on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco, and, in order to obtain their release, our ship was despatched to Melilla, a Spanish convict establishment on that coast, where we were to get into communication with the Sheiks. Melilla, a fortress on a rocky promontory of the desert, was one of the most terrible places on the face of the earth for cruelty and brutality. The condition of the miserable convicts—mostly chained—their scant food, the filthy water they had to drink: their floggings and shootings, and the noisome dens in which they lived, would have melted a heart of stone. Nevertheless, when His Excellency the Spanish Governor of this hell came on board to luncheon with his pretty Sevillana wife and her still prettier sister, we saluted him with seventeen guns, and would have saluted the ladies too, if it had been etiquette.

Again, my smattering of foreign tongues came in of use. After luncheon in the Captain's cabin—to which I had been invited—we landed and went up to the Governor's house, a delightfully-situated place, high up above the fortifications and commanding a magnificent view inland of rolling yellow desert, with a ragged outline of blue mountains beyond. Here the wives and daughters of several other Spaniards were also assembled, and in the evening we danced on a broad terrace, in the light of a brilliant Mediterranean moon, drank coffee and Spanish wines, unknown in England, and were extremely merry, little caring that not a hundred yards away, sweltering in their pestiferous cells and crowded corridors, their half-rotten rags hanging about their emaciated limbs, lay those other human beings—for whom the grace of God and bad luck had provided a different lot—cursing us, no doubt, as the strains of music reached their ears, and as their fancies pictured the bright eyes and graceful figures of their countrywomen; or their mouths ran dry at the thought of cooling drinks and the pure sea breeze. Yet numbers of these poor wretches were not so criminal as many of these officers, who notoriously grew rich by selling rations and clothing, or by conniving at the escape of convicts who could pay.

Next day we had a different kind of diversion, for the Riffs, who have been besieging Melilla ever since it became a Spanish possession, were making a fresh onslaught on the fortress. But beyond a moral certainty of being shot it was difficult to see with what object these reckless Moors almost literally ran their heads against its high stone walls, without any more chance of injuring their enemy than has a shrimp against a man in a diving dress.

The attack which I witnessed was simply idiotic.

A band of desert horsemen—dressed in white and waving flags—would dash up from behind low sandhills, where grew a few bushes of camel thorn, brandishing antique firelocks, which might possibly send a ball through a barn-door at twenty paces, and discharging these harmless weapons at random against the fortifications or at the houses.

Naturally, as this game had been going on for centuries, no one inside the walls showed any concern, beyond not exposing their heads over a parapet or at a window. On the other hand, a number of soldiers were ensconced in completely protected casemates, from which they picked off these desperate fanatics with entire safety to themselves. Then, after a few saddles had been emptied and a few poor horses rolled over or crippled, the Moorish Cavalry would retire, when a closely-packed horde of almost naked Riffs would come leaping, yelling, flourishing swords, and firing off more matchlocks, of course with the same result as had awaited the horsemen; and retiring again only after some forty or fifty had been slain. At one part of the fortifications a long covered way, partly excavated out of the solid rock, but everywhere impervious to anything but dynamite, extended for perhaps a hundred yards into the desert, ending in a very strong redoubt, impossible to assault without scaling-ladders. Into this redoubt another midshipman and myself betook ourselves together with a few Spanish soldiers, all of us armed with rifles. Here, I am ashamed to say, we opened a brisk fire on the Riffs, but it did not occur to us that we were constructively committing murder, as I suppose we were, since practically we had nothing to do with the quarrel. And yet we blazed away with as much ardour as if we had been defending our own homes. But it has always been a satisfaction to me

that I do not think I hit anybody. The fight did not last long, probably not an hour, and before we left the redoubt, I saw dark masses of Riffs winding back over the sandhills like an army of ants, carrying with them their dead and wounded. Then a portcullis was opened, a drawbridge let down, and some twenty or thirty Spanish Cavalry dashed out, galloped towards the retreating enemy, fired a few shots and came scuttling back again, chased by about a dozen Moors on horseback, who had remained behind, hidden in a clump of bushes. Inside our redoubt the damage done—for a few shots came in through the embrasures—was the muzzles knocked off two rifles and a bit chipped out of the ear of a Spanish corporal.

Next day my ship proceeded to a spot where the English captives were to be handed over. This was done without much ceremony, and, as far as I know, without any ransom. That, probably, was extorted from the Sultan. The rescued men were a scratch lot, hardly worth all the fuss made over them—though possibly they themselves thought otherwise—and when we midshipmen heard that for six or eight months they had been living comfortably in the interior, had been gazelle-hunting, and had had the run of the whole place, we could not see what they had to growl at, and felt sure that we ourselves would willingly have gone into captivity for the same number of months under the same conditions.

There were eleven of these mariners; their brig, the *Hymen*, had been captured by the pirates while lying becalmed off the coast. Exactly the same thing goes on now, and in another ship, many years after, I went again to the same place on the same mission.

* * * * *

The Russian War was now over, and we received

orders to go to the Crimea to bring home troops, and, touching at Malta to coal, we reached Constantinople on June 18, 1856. My earliest recollections of that wonderful place are somewhat vague; a confused picture of a vast, heterogeneous city, Oriental and European, all jumbled together; of surpassingly beautiful mosques and delicate minarets, crowds of people of all nationalities jostling each other in narrow and filthy streets, mounds of dogs asleep with small woolly pups sprawling over them, Cavasses in gorgeous liveries, hamals in rags, all the tag-rag and bobtail of a great Eastern city. But I had very little time to see anything and left it without any idea of the extraordinary influence over my life it was destined to exert, and of the friendships which would there be formed.

We coaled rapidly and left for Kazatch, in the Crimea, in two days. Here we remained some time, and I managed to visit every place of interest from the Alma to Balaclava. But numbers of my messmates—with that want of interest in things peculiar to many naval men—devoted every hour of the day they could get ashore to playing cricket, and their evenings to the cafés and restaurants of the French Army at Kamish. I shall never forget my impression of Sevastopol viewed from the Redan, and the extraordinary spectacle of the so-called Valley of Death, a roadway literally paved with shot and shell. This road lay between two bare hills which gradually converged until they formed a narrow defile, and down this the troops had to march on their way to the trenches. It was literally paved with round shot, lying embedded in the earth and rocks. There seemed to have been enough projectiles to have wiped the Allied Armies off the face of the earth. Beyond lay the town of Sevastopol spread out on both sides of the winding harbour. It was a scene

of pitiless desolation, the annihilation of thousands of homes, their white stones in formless heaps, even the very direction of the streets obliterated by fallen masses of masonry. There was not a sound to be heard, the death-like silence only broken by the curious whistling cry of kites and the roll of the surf outside the harbour. As I rode down into this ruined city a sense of depression seized me—precisely as it did many years after in the Tundja Valley—and I can well remember the sickening feeling of the undeserved misery it had brought to thousands of poor wretches, in no way interested in the issue of the struggle. My companion, Farquharson (son of Invercauld) and I rambled aimlessly all over the place, too ignorant to understand its important strategic points. But the most vivid impression it left on us both was the incredible number of fleas we found everywhere, more especially in Fort St. Paul, which had been used as a hospital. We were wearing white ducks, and it is a fact that in a few minutes, in this fort, our legs were black with fleas as high as our knees. We beat a rapid retreat, but as the insects were swarming on us, inside and out, working away tooth and nail with the fury of their long fast, we rushed down to the sea, stripped off everything and plunged into the water. Then we came out and set to work to remove the fleas from our garments as best we could: carrying them to a place farther along the shore, and once more swimming about a little before putting them on. In that short time we had received five hundred bites, possibly five thousand, for the whole of the lower part of our bodies was as though we had had measles, whilst the irritation for several days was unbearable.

Roaming about Sevastopol we espied a roll of canvas lying under a heap of stones, near a vast pile of beams,

coloured tiles, and woodwork which indicated the ruins of a church. We set to work and cleared away the fallen rubbish from the canvas, which we found to be an oil painting of the Crucifixion, about five feet long, artistically worthless, but, from the quality of the canvas and the style of the colouring, evidently very ancient. We rolled it up again, and bore it away in triumph, settling the ownership by my giving Farquharson a bottle of rum for his half interest; the best bottle of rum I ever gave way. The picture hangs in my house to this day, and carries me back all those years with a vividness of impression that nothing can dim. But it was a risky speculation for me, for I ran every chance of losing both the picture and the rum, for looting was strictly prohibited, and whilst our Allies—French, Italian, and Turk—stole right and left, even from defenceless peasants, we British were not allowed to pick up so much as a broken scent-bottle as a memorial of that great war. I, however, managed to smuggle my picture on board after dark, stowing it away, somewhat irreverently, amongst sea-boots, sardine tins, brass knockers, bells, or other trophies of raids on peaceful citizens all over the world, in the big square enclosure under the table of the midshipman's berth—called by us the "jolly boat" —where it lay in obscure safety until I got home.

I have frequently tried since by examining any plan I could get of Sevastopol to localise the spot where this church stood, which I assume was Roman, as pictures of this kind find no place in Orthodox or Greek churches, but I have always failed to do so. I have offered it to two Czars, but have never received a reply to either of my letters, and finally I called personally on a leading Russian priest—I need not say where—and was almost kicked out of the house by this frowsy

and ignorant fool, who, unable to talk French, persisted throughout our brief interview in talking some gibberish I could not understand. I imagine he thought that I was a Protestant missionary in disguise come to convert him; or, possibly, he was only waiting to see what backsheesh I would offer him.

Again with Farquharson, I visited Balaclava and the heights of Inkermann and many other places, now historic, round which already myths were beginning to gather, persons and personages figuring therein as heroes, who, at the time, it had been a toss-up whether they ought not to have been tried for incompetence or worse, and shot.

It is unnecessary to describe Balaclava or its grand scenery—both so well known—beyond saying that the town which the war had caused to grow up about the anchorage, was the most ramshackle place the mind can imagine, where even the ribs of dead horses and mules had been impounded to assist in its architecture; or where a café would be entirely constructed of British Army boots, embedded in dried mud, together with preserved-meat tins and empty bottles, knapsacks, busbees, and all other *disjecta membra* of the battlefield. There is a place near Balaclava where, to this day, millions of empty bottles and tin pans are still to be seen, memorials of the Crimean War. The inhabitants of this rag-and-bone town at the time I speak of, were not less remarkable than their abodes; indeed, in their general appearance there was considerable resemblance. They seemed the refuse of civilisation, especially the women, who, here, as always, managed to touch a lower level than the lowest man, precisely as the better soar so infinitely above him. Every disreputable female from the slums of London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and the Levant seemed to have

assembled here, and though the moralists of the head-quarters demanded that these ladies should ostensibly be the wives of some one, this restriction was not closely observed. Many of these married persons by some strange process had large families of grown-up daughters about their own age—some with at least eight—nearly all, apparently, born within a year or two of each other, but of different nationalities, and having no language in common. An English chaplain, a kind, guileless man—who called his house Zebra Hall, from its being painted in black and white bands—told me that, in an official visit to one of these *families*, he had been much struck with this polyglot peculiarity.

The occasion of his visit had been tragic enough and is worth recording. He had been sent for hurriedly by one of the women who was dying. She spoke good English, and no other tongue, and she told him a pitiful story. Her father, a Colonel of Marines, living at Plymouth, had turned her out of house and home, for she had loved an officer in a Line Regiment, not wisely but too well. By hook or by crook she had followed this man to Malta, and then to the Crimea, where he had discarded her and had literally kicked her out of his tent. Starving, in frost and snow, she had trudged on foot from near the Lines at Sevastopol to Balaclava, where she had fallen into the hands of the Provost Marshal, had been locked up for two nights and finally handed over to the tender keeping of one of the ladies with a big family. Soon after being installed in this abode a miserable little life was ushered into this world of pain, and, as the chaplain leant over the pile of filthy Army blankets on which she lay dying, he saw the tiny baby tightly folded in the arms of his unhappy mother. Fallen as she was, some Angel of God must have been whispering in her ear, for she implored

the chaplain to give her the Sacrament. He ran off to his house and came back with the Holy Elements. When he got back a terribly unfitting scene presented itself, for the polyglot mother was thrusting out of the door some drunken French sailors who wished to come in. Inside the sisters were waiting for the chaplain, for the dying woman had told them what he had gone for. He went into the back room, the sisters followed, and as he administered the Holy Mystery they all knelt down and hid their faces, though not one of them was of the Anglican faith. The woman died just as he had finished the last sentence, with her baby's fist tangled in her hair, but the chaplain never learnt either her father's name nor that of the lover, to both of whom God will doubtless deal out justice. All this happened a short time before I was in Balaclava, and I saw the little mound of new earth under which she lay. There was no headstone, but the chaplain had put a rough wooden cross over the grave with M.M. on it, "Mary Magdalene."

My companion and I naturally went the rounds of Balaclava, and visited the harbour, where numbers of small craft were being loaded with tents and all manner of military stores, things sold to Jews for a tenth of their value. The heat was intense, for few places are hotter than the Crimea during the summer, and again it is Arctic in the winter. After wandering about all day amongst greasy Greeks, frowsy Frenchmen, perspiring Germans, unwashed Turks, and grimy Italians, we went into a *soi-disant* restaurant to have some food, where a French woman—who could not have weighed less than seventeen stone—attended to our wants arrayed in all the simplicity of a chemise and red stockings. She apologised for her lack of costume, with some lingering idea that English boys

must be accustomed to see her sex more completely clad, but I begged her not to *gêner* herself, which so pleased her that, quite unsolicited, she put her huge bare arm round my neck and kissed me, saying,

"Ah! Tu parles Français, mon petit serin!" which I suppose justified, in her eyes, the liberty she was taking.

After our meal, which was decidedly savoury, we strolled into a neighbouring tent, where we found a roulette table, with a shocking lot of rascals standing round. We played, and were, naturally, cheated out of nearly every farthing we had—no great sum but our all—a loss which might have had very serious consequences. The next place of entertainment we tried was a long, low barn, fitted up with a stage at one end with candles—stuck in bottles for footlights—guttering in the wind. The place was crammed with soldiers of various nationalities and with a sprinkling of British bluejackets and marines. The heat was stifling and the aroma of the place most mixed, humanity and bad tobacco seeming to get the best in this conflict of almost visible stenches. The programme at this *café chantant* was strictly of the variety order; the leading performers being French girls who screeched outrageously *risqué* songs in that shrill metallic voice found nowhere out of France. After each song—accompanied by dancing, and postures not less *risqué*—these ladies would come down over the footlights and plump themselves indifferently on the first knee that presented itself; their places on the stage being filled by two Greeks, a hump-backed male dwarf and a shrivelled hag of a woman, who both sang songs standing on their heads. After these and other similar performances the benches were cleared for general dancing, and then a row began through the

levity of a bluejacket who had tried to make the Greek hag stand on her head once more. The dwarf flew about screaming like a wild beast, knives were out, French and Italian soldiers were going down right and left under the fists of the British man-of-warsmen, when suddenly the proprietor extinguished the lights, leaving us all fighting and scuffling in pitchy darkness. To escape from the *mêlée* was by no means easy, for the door was blocked by a crowd of women and men trying to get out, but at last Farquharson and I, after a desperate struggle, found ourselves again breathing the fresh night air.

We now went to look for our horses, for it was past eleven, and we had some fourteen miles to ride to Kazatch, if I remember the distance right. With difficulty we found the stall where we had left our animals, but to our dismay discovered that mine had gone dead lame, for he had been hired out in our absence to some bluejackets, and, in addition to the lameness, was absolutely done; in fact, the poor beast could not move a yard.

In this dilemma, and now penniless, we thought of hunting up a man called Oldfield, commanding a gunboat in the harbour, but decided against it, the hour being so late and his view of the affair by no means certain. Then we bethought us of both trying to ride the same horse, but, when we mounted, the animal sent us flying to the amusement of a knot of loafers who had gathered round. To have walked all the way was impossible, as apart from the distance, the country was teeming with half-starved camp-followers and cut-throats. But to go somehow was imperatively necessary, for our ship was to sail next day. In the height of our difficulty, a good-natured Englishman came to our rescue, who—in exchange for an order

on my agents—Messrs. Stilwell & Co.—handed us over two sovereigns, which was the sum demanded for the hire of a horse.

More than thirty years after this, I met this kind-hearted man by the purest accident—in a train between Liverpool and London—and I leave it to unbelievers in psychic recognition to say why, absolutely *à propos* of nothing, the whole of this Balaclava scene flashed on my memory with such force that—though I had not said a word to him—I straightway asked him if he had been in the Crimea. He seemed extremely astonished, and still more so when I said, "Your name must be Booker, and you once gave a midshipman two sovereigns on a bill of his, to help him out of a difficulty in Balaclava." He thought for a moment and then said, "Yes, I do remember it; but how can you remember me, after all these years?" I said, "I don't remember you personally, but something tells me you are the man." He showed me his card, and I had never forgotten the name.

But to return to my story.

By this time it was very late, and we started off with dim ideas of our road, but after floundering through bogs and going miles out of our way we finally reached a hilltop from which we saw the blessed masthead lights of the men-of-war, twinkling in a pit of darkness below us.

How our horses scrambled down that hillside—which by daylight looked like a wall—Heaven only knows, but we rode straight for the lights, and when we reached the bottom found ourselves in the French camp and near the restaurant where we had hired our horses. The proprietor was furious at our having left his horse behind, until his *vivandière*, a fine, strapping Normande, came out with a lantern, and discovered that he had made the best of the bargain in the exchange; as, indeed, he had.

With some difficulty we got a boat and were on board just after four, but, alas! only to find the First Lieutenant already on deck, superintending holystoning, who at once stopped our leave for a fortnight for not having returned earlier in the night. However, we did not mind this, being only too thankful we had not missed our ship, which was already getting up steam.

We sailed that day; having embarked a quantity of stores, and two officers for passage home—a Colonel Maclean, of the Artillery, and another whose name I have forgotten. We also had with us two horses, one Lord Raglan's charger, called Beaufort, the other a beautiful Shumla pony, which had belonged to my cousin Gloucester Gambier, of the Horse Artillery, who had been badly wounded at Inkermann, but recovered, and became Adjutant-General of Artillery.

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An incident occurred in the homeward voyage which galled me very much at the time, as it would have any sensitive boy. In a dead calm we sighted an Italian speronare, a boat of the Calabrian coast. The men in it made signals of distress, and, going alongside, we found they had run short of water, having been becalmed for days. I was sent for by Captain Barker, and going up on the bridge was told to ask if there was anything else they wanted, the conversation up to that point having been carried on in pantomime. They could not understand a word I said, nor I a word of their lingo, for they spoke only Neapolitan or Calabrese, and I only knew pure Tuscan. In consequence, I was dismissed from the bridge as an impostor, for I was believed, up to that time, to know Italian. It was useless for me to explain that the language these men spoke bore no more resemblance to real Italian than Breton does to Parisian French.

Very few books were carried on board ship in those days and still fewer read. There was a despairing collection—called by courtesy the ship's library—under the charge of the purser's steward, and as the selection was entrusted to some Admiralty pundit, it consisted of the dullest of novels and a few works relating to naval matters. Scattered sparsely, however, through the cabins of lieutenants, surgeons, and chaplains, such works as Shakespeare, Boccaccio's "Decameron," Boswell's "Life of Johnson," "Tom Jones," "Clarissa Harlowe," "Roderick Random," Margaret of Navarre's "Heptameron," Massinger and Ford and Beaumont and Fletcher's plays and others of that type, might occasionally be found. I had a few books of my own, at the bottom of my chest, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Sale's Koran, Herodotus, Livy's "History of Rome," Ovid's "Metamorphoses," Anacreon, the Bible, the Apocrypha, and a student's Gibbon. I read every one of these books, spending hours stretched in a coil of rope in the main-top; and thus kept up something of what I had learnt at home.

Of the remainder of my service in the *Retribution* there is nothing to record. We paid off on the 23rd of August, 1856, and recommissioned next day, spending again many weary weeks at Sheerness, a life which became so deadly and unprofitable that my father used interest at the Admiralty, and I got appointed to a sailing frigate, the *Iris*, bound for the Australian station—which included New Zealand, Tasmania, New Guinea, and the whole of the Pacific Islands.

She was a six-and-twenty gun ship, of the old school, a mere tub to look at, but with the lines of a yacht below water, and was one of the fastest sailers afloat. She was only a thousand tons burden, which seems now absurd, as we had a very large complement of men and

officers. As to ourselves we were seventeen in the midshipman's mess, so it is easy to imagine we were fairly well boxed up, and, indeed, much worse off for room than in the *Retribution*.

I joined at Chatham, where the *Iris* was fitting out, lashed alongside an old fighting ship of the great war, the *Tartar*. Only a few years ago this old ship was sold out of the service and broken up, and now, no doubt, the old figure-head is grinning over the wall at the bottom of Vauxhall Bridge Road, and telling wondrous tales of great sea fights to the other worthies who there keep him company.

And what wonderful stories they must be, of long vigils in stormy nights of snow, week after week, year after year, guarding their own and blockading the coast of the enemy, never coming into port even for repairs, hoisting in their provisions at sea. Here they all are, a lumpy Venus, a simpering Bellona, Mars with a horrid squint, and Agamemnon going about, for a century, with half his nose off; some cock-eyed old British Admiral or General, whom his countrymen delighted to honour with a ribbon, his breast puffed up like a pouter pigeon's; some jolly old king, who harmlessly came to believe he really had been a sailor, with his hooked nose, fat cheeks and a general air of benign inbecility about him, a rakish cock to his hat suggesting rather a spree on the Hard at Portsea than a battle.

CHAPTER VI

THE *IRIS* AND THE TROPICS

Join H.M.S. *Iris*—Lively times at Upnor gipsy camp—Pistol practice as carried on by the Royal Engineers—We shoot off a man's ear—Our Skipper and Chaplain—Our education—Messmates—A mixed lot—Life in a frigate—A musical Cerberus—Channel gales—Goodbye to England for four years.

ON joining the *Iris* I found several midshipmen already installed, and a lively time we had of it for a fortnight or so, thanks to the slackness of the Admiralty in appointing a chaplain. We were, however, kept fairly up to the mark, and were greatly interested in all the process of fitting out a ship, the last chance, probably, that would befall any of us for observing the whole operation. For we were beginning with the bare hull: getting in our own masts, tanks, guns, provisions, sails, rope, and all the innumerable things that go to make up that most complicated contrivance—the outcome of centuries of experience—a full-rigged man-of-war.

But I am afraid that, in reality, we thought more of going ashore, and in seeking amusements.

Notable amongst these was a gipsy settlement at Upnor, across the Medway, where an encampment of these diverting nomads was practically permanent; with a big booth in which sailors and soldiers, with their

girls, and youths from Chatham and Rochester would dance until all hours of the morning, drinking brandy, gin, or rum, out of tin panikins, and eating food that would have turned the stomach of a gargoyle. Then, in the grey of the morning, we would embark in ferry boats—designed to carry ten persons—in which at least thirty of us would cram, the men and boys underneath, the ladies piled on the top of us, the ferryman, perched up in the bows, struggling manfully with a pair of sculls which, flush with the water, seemed to be thrust out from under a compact mass of human beings. The wonder is that only once a boat upset, and then that only two out of the twenty passengers were drowned, both women, submerged for the last time.

The queen of these gipsies was a handsome woman, with a splendid colour and an Eastern glory in her eyes, off which it was difficult to take one's own, or even see anything else when she was near. She was always kind to us youngsters, and, on one occasion, took my part valiantly and to some effect, by collaring a big brute who had twice insulted me. She told me curious facts about her own people, amongst them that, as the evil eye can be averted by something that suddenly attracts attention, gipsies tie bits of red rag into their children's hair, or made a black patch on their foreheads with paint, on which the maleficent glance alighting expends itself.

My second brother, Edward, was at this time stationed at the Royal Engineer Barracks at Brompton, Chatham, and I spent a good deal of my time with him. I was rather envious of the difference between his life and mine, his all decorum, with a well-ordered mess, the long oak table polished like a mirror, covered with handsome silver, costly glass, and trophies presented by byegone worthies, and my abode, a dark hole on

the lower deck of a frigate, where rats scuttled over a greasy tablecloth, whilst cockroaches and weevils rushed about as thick as stockbrokers in Throgmorton Street—and of no more use. My brother had a servant, Andrews, extraordinarily stupid, but possessed of remarkable *sang-froid*. We were practising with a saloon pistol in my brother's quarters, and Andrews was in a small dressing-room adjoining, when a ball went through the door and took the tip off his ear. Most men would have made some remark: he did not, and we knew nothing about it, until by chance looking into the room we saw him groping about under the table for something he had lost. "What are you looking for, Andrews?" said my brother.

He drew up, stood attention, and replied, in an apologetic tone—as if deprecating his master's wrath—

"I was only a-looking for a bit of my ear as come off when you fired that shot though the door, sir."

He evidently thought that for a private to have his ear shot off did not entitle him to interfere with an officer's amusement.

My new Skipper, though he was a choleric old gentleman and disposed to administer the cat more freely than most, was credited with having a kind heart. But it was wonderful how he kept the secret. Why we all came to the conclusion that he was "no sailor" —even before the frigate had been towed down to the Nore—I do not know. Perhaps it was the girth of his waistcoat, or his small yellow wig, or his aggressive strut, as if always putting his foot down on human bugs; whilst, on the other hand, the First Lieutenant, Deane, was immediately recognised as a first-rate seaman and a man in whom all could trust in an emergency. After the Captain and the First Lieutenant, the next person in importance, in

the eyes of midshipmen, is the Chaplain; that is, if he is "double-barrelled," as we called it, namely, one combining the duties of Chaplain and Naval-Instructor. Consequently we were all on the alert as to what our tormentor would turn out. His name was Campbell, and I now know that when he joined he was still quite a young man, between twenty-six and thirty; but after-knowledge never alters the first impression of childhood, and he still seems to me a stiff, red-whiskered old "buster," with whom it was impossible to associate the idea of fun or levity. As a matter of fact, in spite of his stiff manner and his firm mouth, he was capable of great feeling: was straightforward, and always a kind friend to me. He was well read and could talk about things, whilst his even-handed justice gained him adherents, as time went on. For he never toadied. Of what he taught us it is only necessary to say that, beyond navigation and nautical astronomy, plain and spherical trigonometry and cognate sciences, it was not incumbent on him to teach us anything. The education midshipmen then received was as absurd as I imagine it to be still. Foreign languages, history or politics were considered as unnecessary as a knowledge of how to crochet or to make artificial flowers, although many of us were destined, later in life, to conduct negotiations requiring tact and diplomacy, when a mistake might involve the country in war.

My messmates were a particularly nice set of fellows, comprising, naturally, a wide range of character, of manners, and of breeding. Amongst us were many types, from the languid, easy-going son of the First Lord of the Admiralty, with nothing to do but to sit still and let the pleasant breezes of patronage blow him into all the best billets—toadied by every one, from Colonial Governors downwards—to the reckless, friendless rip

and daredevil, always in trouble, always borrowing sums he never repaid, a match with his fists for all of us. Then there was the industrious, painstaking boy, who finally got three first-class certificates, and was immediately promoted, he himself of no more use afloat than a wheelbarrow; or the boy who had mistaken his profession, and should have been an actor; or the ill-tempered, lanky lad with a pale greenish complexion and a grievance; or the boy whose father kept hounds and could ride; and the other boy who gave out that his father kept horses, but had himself, as it turned out, never been on a horse; or the thin-skinned man, not of the social hierarchy, who had come out of the Merchant Service, and seemed to harbour rancour against the Queen's Navy; or the people who dropped their h's and considered it a personal affront if others got them in the right place; or the boys who, driven by hunger, stole the Skipper's bananas; the boys equally hungry who did not; or the boys who took to rum like mother's milk, using oaths that might have made a costermonger turn pale; or the quiet little lad with meek eyes and sandy hair, who always went ashore with the parson or the doctor, and came off at six; or the other boy who loved a spree as his own soul, who lent or gave away every farthing he had, whose leave was always jammed; or the lad in whom all sense of fear was lacking, stupid with books, the smartest of all of us aloft, who dived off the fore-yard—sixty feet up—even before he could swim properly, who, though half his size, fought the mess bully, day after day, and finally vanquished him, who ran back under a volley of arrows and spears, in a Pacific Island fight, to help a wounded man, and, naturally, ended his own career, in another ship, in trying to save a man who had fallen overboard in a gale—these and many others! Picture all these diversified characters

huddled together in a space measured by a few feet, eating, sleeping, dressing, talking, singing, fighting and half-starved, living below in almost perpetual darkness; reading practically nothing but unprofitable trash; roused out at half-past six every morning of their lives, the midshipmen and mates amongst them spending four hours out of every twelve walking about the deck on watch in all weathers, and the remaining eight hours given up to school, gun-drill, sword-exercise, and taking sights, with interludes of being mast-headed for punishment, and you will have some idea of a midshipman's life in the old days in a sailing frigate.

I have said half-starved advisedly, for I have many reminiscences of nights spent walking up and down a wet deck as hungry as a polar bear. For always on the second day after leaving port, our fresh provisions ran out and we were reduced to the ordinary ship's rations, which were infinitely worse then than they are now and far inferior to those of any ordinary merchant ship. In harbour also it was little better, for the fresh meat, supplied by thievish contractors, was always tough and bad, and was rendered entirely tasteless by the manipulations of the impostor who called himself the midshipman's cook. Imagine the culinary crimes of twenty land cooks rolled into one, plus all their ignorance, wilfulness and malice, and you may then have some distant idea of what a sea cook can be, and you will cease to wonder that "son of a sea cook" is almost the most opprobrious epithet that can be applied to a seaman. I don't know that landsmen would rejoice at being called "son of a plain cook"; but it would be a delicate compliment in a man-of-war.

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In due time my ship was ready for sea, and, in tow of a tug, we reached the Nore. We were fairly well

shaken together by this time and began to know one another: the Skipper peremptory and pompous; the First Lieutenant a strict disciplinarian whose eye nothing escaped; one of the Lieutenants, an indolent, attenuated man, with willowy manners, long, waving whiskers, and legs like gun barrels; another, Bell by name, a hearty, red-whiskered Irishman; Campbell, the Chaplain, already described; Arquimbeau, the Master, a dark, foreign-looking man, with a hooked nose slightly askew, admirable at his work and pleasant withal; Moresby, our Paymaster, small, bustling, well-read and an excellent photographer, in those days a dawning science; our old Scotch Doctor, with the broadest Aberdonian accent, and an unconscious sense of humour, short, bow-legged, with red, mutton-chop whiskers, which lay across his face like two small boomerangs; another man, a curiosity, with the face of a rat and the manners of a mosquito; our marine, Tom Bent, one of the liveliest, most rollicking of men you would wish to meet afloat or ashore. Nor can I forget my many friends before the mast, the captain of my top, whose name I omit, as good a man as ever trod deck, driven by injustice to desert, and so, all in good time, to prosperity as a squatter; or Lee, one of the boatswain's mates, a dark, reserved character, a born sailor, with an unerring instinct about weather, presence of mind in danger, and courage that nothing could daunt. Then there was the gunner, Barter, who took life very seriously, a man with great force of character and a broken leg, and—next to Deane—the strongest personality in the ship. Then, of another type was the master-at-arms, a clever, thin man, with a delicate face like a Jewess, and a passion for music, a strange taste for a man of cells and handcuffs, but not in any way unfitting him for his special work. To this man we were greatly indebted, for he represented a

link between our uncultured life and that other life, where music and art were not held in derision. He soon created a small string band, working up the raw material he found to hand amongst the crew, with untiring patience and against all obstacles, for few cared about music on board. I was passionately fond of it, buying the scores of now antiquated operas—Rossini, Verdi, Bellini—out of my limited income; all for love of it. It is a tribute to the indefatigable energy and genius of this master-at-arms that in a few months he had taught these men to play really fairly well, with feeling and precision, even such things as the overture to "Euryanthe," with selections from "Lucrezia Borgia," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Adelaida," and pieces from Mozart, Haydn, and other classic composers.

What a strange sight it would have appeared to a shore-going leader of orchestra, these seven or eight men huddled together between two guns on the main-deck, their music lighted by two or three tallow-dips flickering fitfully in horn lanterns; often with sea water swishing over their bare feet coming in at the lee scuppers as the vessel plunged and rolled; a stout rope stretched across from the breech of one gun to the next, to prevent these musicians "fetching way" down the ward-room skylight! How often I have seen this, each man every two or three minutes making a grab at his music—resting on a wooden frame cleated down to the deck—and blowing, or fiddling, or whacking his drum, as Heaven and the master-at-arms had directed, his body swaying at the angle necessary to keep his equilibrium. Or I have helped to fish up fiddles, 'cello, music, and all the orchestral paraphernalia out of the water, when some extra heavy sea has come crashing over the weather netting and has poured down the skid-grating on to the main-deck.

But I must return to our leaving the Nore for Spithead, when we suddenly dropped into a stiff gale in the Channel, a pleasant beginning—as all sailors will understand—with every rope new and stretching as only a gale can stretch it, with every sail trying to find the best way out of the bolt ropes: half the men ignorant of the lead of the ropes, the guns only half secured: boats banging against the davits, hammocks wet through: the Skipper clinging on to the weather-rail: the First Lieutenant shouting orders in a voice that would drown the Last Trumpet: the bluejackets aloft hanging on to the yards getting in treble reefs and cheering as they rouse the reef-band out to windward: those on the weather-earring straining every nerve; the marines standing about the bits ready to haul on ropes they do not understand the use of, most of them miserably sick, cursing the day of their amphibious enlistment, the "dry idlers"—purser, parson, sawbones, &c.—down in the wardroom, giving their opinion that everything is being done wrong, and everything is unlike what *they* have seen in other ships; or crawling up cautiously to look at the great waves and see what more fault they can find, and then dodging down again to the wardroom fire, out of the hail and sleet, to swill mulled port, until it is time to roll into their beds and sleep tight till the morning.

We reached Spithead pretty well knocked about, and it took us nearly a week to set up the lower rigging and prepare once more to face the Channel and the Bay of Biscay. We sailed again on the 8th of March, coming in for another gale, and putting into Plymouth Sound, where once more we set up rigging, filled up with water and provisions, and left—in twenty-four hours—for our destination in the Antipodes.

How well I remember that night! Darkness had

closed in before we lost sight of England, the lights on Plymouth Hoe twinkling astern as we stood over towards the coast of France with half a gale of wind from the south-west and a heavy chopping sea, so that we were soon under treble reefs again. But by this time even the "dry idlers" could find nothing wrong in the seamanship, nor much to complain of as to things fetching way, for Deane had rapidly got everything in order, and it was a bad look-out for any one who had not learnt, or did not remember, his station. We had gale after gale, freshening into a hurricane in the Bay of Biscay, and attended with slight disasters, such as carrying away small spars, wheel ropes, &c. But already the daily routine of man-of-war life was in full swing, with all its time-honoured dignity, its daily invocation to the Eternal, "who alone spreads out the heavens and rules the raging of the sea"—a life of law, and of order interrupted by nothing, the executives on watch and teaching gun-drill, the purser serving out slops and religious books, the doctor clapping lint and plaster on broken fingers and toes—almost the only professional work that falls to a naval surgeon—the marines no longer sick; whilst those who have left home broken-hearted for the sake of some girl are already planning adventures to come off at Rio Janeiro, or at whatever port the wind and weather or the emptiness of the Skipper's larder, may blow us.

A few days of bad weather and we picked up the trade winds—a delightful contrast to the Channel and the Bay—and were soon on the Equator, where, crossing the Line, the old Pagan ceremony in connection with Sun-worship and Neptune was, of course, observed, the watery god being received with all due honours, and every neophyte duly soused and scraped with a piece of hoop iron, all except our Skipper, who had, I

believe, never crossed the Line before. By this time cliques—which make a man-of-war a veritable microcosm—had begun to form. But cloth does not necessarily stick to cloth, and more especially is this the case with the captain of a man-of-war, who is bound by obvious limitations. For though he would naturally select his personal friends from his own line, he finds it is never a wise thing to do; as it is precisely with the executive that a commanding officer mostly comes into collision, rendering special friendships inconvenient. Of course many captains find no difficulty in discovering occasion to rebuke any one, no matter how zealous or efficient; still, with parsons, pursers, and doctors, these opportunities are rarer, so that a longer interval may occur between unpleasantnesses, giving time for the cuticle to thicken over the sore.

To this long sea voyage, lasting months, I am indebted for some further advance in mental culture, for our Paymaster, Moresby, had a few standard books in his cabin which I had not read, and these he always lent me. I learnt also, in a compendious form, the dry facts of the history of England and France out of Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates," and, also out of that same excellent compilation, all that I have ever known of some of the greatest men that have lived and died. The doctor had also a few books on medical subjects, most of them as old as Galen no doubt, but still to me intensely interesting. I also tried to keep up my French, reading from end to end the few French books there were on board—for I was old enough now to hold my own and cared no longer for the ridicule of other boys, or young men, who hated any one to know more than they themselves. I read Voltaire's "Siècle de Louis XIV." over and over again, and Rabelais more than once. My classics, however, were fast slipping away,

even the Greek Testament itself becoming a puzzler in parts. I found myself growing rapidly in body and mind, and I began now to think there were possibilities of enjoyment beyond wrenching off door-knockers, and, further, I was blessed with a weak head for strong liquors, and could not then smoke, for it made me sick. So many things attracted me which for the rowdies amongst us had no charm. For instance, I was looking forward to seeing Brazil, having read about the wonders of its forests and of the beauties of Rio Janeiro, and I longed to see palm-trees, orchids growing wild, monkeys skipping about, parrots, immense lizards, and all other forms of tropical life. But I was not a studious boy, in the sense of learning anything thoroughly, for the instincts of amusing myself always predominated, and whenever anything of the kind came to hand I was as keen as any one, nothing coming amiss, from a Nigger ball with lively Brazilian half-castes to a State function. I do not know that a boy is any the worse for a wide outlook.

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And all this time the frigate is rolling about under a tropic sun, or lying drenched in tropical rain, which falls in such torrents that the scuppers will scarce carry it off. Every morning at six the huge sun with sudden and blazing heat rises straight up out of the molten sea, climbs to the zenith with a movement visible to the naked eye, and with equal haste hurries down below the horizon at the same hour in the evening, often leaving that curious flash of green light on the sea, lasting only a few seconds, which is seen when the atmosphere is particularly clear. Then night rapidly takes possession of the sky, and countless millions of stars, infinite and eternal, whose components never had a beginning and never can have an end, stand out in all

their staggering glory, gods in the indestructibility of their matter, unerringly carrying out immutable laws from for ever backwards, to for ever forwards, finally to crash into each other, their death, the birth of new worlds.

Solemn are the thoughts awakened by a calm tropical night at sea, the stars and eternity overhead, the fathomless ocean below, whilst the frail woodwork of the vessel bears its hundreds of lives to their unalterable Destiny.

CHAPTER VII

RIO JANEIRO AND CAPE COLONY

Rio Janeiro—Its magnificent scenery—Slave market—A "flogging ship"—Six strokes of the cat for every one on board—Ball at the Palace—Entertaining sea-slang and the pretty Brazilian—A curious history—Plague-stricken village—Prelude of a psychic experience—Story of an albatross—Cape of Good Hope—Bushmen—Dorsal disabilities of their women—De Wet's estimate of his Boer countrymen—Sail for Australia.

THE harbour of Rio Janeiro at last! and few things can compare with its fantastic beauty, its exaggerated outline of peaks and hills; the curious cone of rock—the Sugar Loaf Hill—at its entrance, the Corcovado, a sharp, towering acclivity which overhangs the town, or the lofty basaltic columns of the Organ Mountains lying inland at the head of the Bay. It is common to make comparisons between Rio and Sydney harbours, but two places less capable of comparison it would be difficult to find; the first wildly romantic with mountains clothed with brilliant tropical verdure; the second, a series of rounded hills, a few hundred feet high, bearing scattered patches of stunted, colourless gum-trees, whilst as to what man has done to enhance the beauty of either place, comparison is still less possible. For the city of Rio Janeiro has all the interest of nearly four centuries of slow growth, with its historic Cathedral, its quaint Spanish and Portuguese

broad-terraced, flat-roofed houses, with palms projecting out of every courtyard, and all the indefinable interest which gathers round the capital of a country very nearly as large as all Europe,[1] which has witnessed revolutionary scenes as terrible as those of Paris, and where, even in my day, slaves were sold in open market, whilst Sydney is merely the agglomerated product of the modern jerry-architect, rows and rows of houses all alike, and with suburbs as ugly as Upper Tooting. Still, Sydney Harbour has a beauty of its own, of wide sweeping bays, lying sheltered behind the great Gates or headlands which open upon them from the ocean, whilst, in detail, pleasing scenes are to be discovered, silver stranded beaches, with the gum and the palmetto hanging over into the deep blue water, and with a few small wooded islands, but all unobtrusive. But the startling effect of Rio Janeiro, which compels the admiration of the least emotional, which rivets the attention of the man at the masthead as well as the officer leaning over the hammock-netting, is entirely wanting in Sydney.

The *Iris* was not many days in Rio; for two reasons, both epidemic: namely, yellow fever and desertion from our ship, the first killing people daily by the hundred; the second, a disease we never shook off all the commission. For the *Iris* was a "flogging ship," and a bluejacket had to keep his eyes skinned to avoid the cat. But to convey an idea, to a landsman, as to how much flogging that meant, I have counted up my log records of flogging, and find that there were close on nine hundred lashes distributed amongst the bluejackets and marines, or about enough to have administered some five or six to every living soul on board, including the Skipper and Parson; good sound lashes, too, with

[1] Brazil is 3,300,000 square miles in extent, Europe is 3,800,000.

a cruel whistle through the air, as the nine tails spread themselves out on the man's back, and not the feeble, trumpery floggings as received by garrotters and wife-beaters ashore, which are childish in comparison. The unrecorded floggings of the ship's boys, and the countless canings on their hands, are not included in the above nine hundred; and would certainly be treble the number of those of the men, so that, in round numbers, we reach the respectable figure of two thousand seven hundred cuts with cat and cane, "for the punishment of vice and the maintenance of true religion," as set forth in the Articles of War.

During our stay in Rio Janeiro, we came in for several entertainments. The town was *en fête*, for nothing in particular, for it was never difficult to find a pretext for public amusement in that idle, dissolute city, where one could buy or hire as many white, black, or whitey-brown men or women as you pleased, and dispose of them again as easily as oranges.

Amongst other things we were invited to a ball at the Palace, where we had a good time, in spite of knowing nothing of Portuguese or Spanish. I was introduced to a pretty Brazilian girl, with hair like black silk, and eyes like a raven's; fairly bewildering after months of sea. She was about my own age, a child in European estimation, but a complete woman in that land of the sun, and we danced together more or less all night. She was very *naive* and spoke English with a fascinating unconventionality, interlarded with much sea-slang which she had learnt from her English governess, daughter of an ex-sailor and storekeeper in the Naval Depôt at Rio. The night was, of course, exquisitely warm and the dancers strolled all over the garden, laden with the scent of thousands of flowers and of the immense magnolias which grew everywhere. Beyond the garden was a magnificent

avenue of palms where the moonlight shone in broad bands and myriads of fireflies darted about in every direction. At the end of the avenue lay a dark wood, with even more fireflies, for their numbers seemed incredible. I caught some and stuck them in my friend's hair, when she exclaimed—

"For heaven's sake keep your weather eye lifting for mama: she's always all over the place, like a shifting back-stay!"

When we returned to the ball-room we found we had forgotten to remove the fireflies, and as chance decreed it the first person we met was mama, who, however, did not seem the dragon I expected, as she merely smiled and pointed to her daughter's head, for she herself was still young enough to have liked fireflies.

There was a lady at the Court of Don Pedro II. with an extraordinary history, and she figured at this ball. She was a native of Bogŏtà, Colombia, her father a ruined hidalgo of Spain, her mother an Indian. She had been actually sold by this said father to an American in New Orleans, when she was fifteen; had lived with him two years, had killed him for his brutality, and escaped in an open boat alone. Disguised as a man she served two years as a steward's boy in a steamer without her sex being discovered, and then came by chance to Rio, where she went on to the stage, and became a great dancer, marrying a very rich man, about forty years older than herself, who died of apoplexy very soon after, leaving her with a large fortune. She had then hunted up her father—who, by this time, had sunk as low as he could—had bought back the old family property in Spain, and had settled him on it, with reversion to herself. Opinions in Rio differed greatly about her, some thinking she should never have forgiven her father, others that she had acted nobly. Thinking it over

now I agree with the last. She was still extraordinarily beautiful when I saw her, dark, clear skin, with eyes no painter could reproduce, a short delicate nose, and a terribly earnest expression about her thin lips. She had the undulating, stealthy walk of a wild animal and a faultless figure. It was my firefly girl who told me this story, as we sat in a conservatory, heavy with the scent of orchids. And here I had another example of sea-going English from her, when she sighted our Skipper, bowsed into the tightest of full-dress coats, its gilded tails sticking out behind as though he wore a bustle, his neck bulging out over his collar, his face purple, his small yellow wig jauntily cocked over one ear.

"What a funny old Cockyolly-boy, is he not?" she remarked; and seeing me smile, "Or is it Loplollybird? I never can remember which my governess called them."

My next Brazilian experience was very different. Wood—to whom I have before alluded as the son of the First Lord—and I were out riding, and having wandered out of our way in a forest, came on a collection of native huts, built of sticks and banana-leaves, and occupied by woe-begone niggers and cross-breeds, whose squalor and misery were terrible. There appeared to be nothing to eat in the whole place, not even bananas, or any of the cheap food of the country, though a few repulsive-looking black pigs roamed about untouched, for a reason we soon gathered. Evidently some dreadful calamity had overtaken this unhappy community; our arrival failing to arouse any interest amongst them, except to some starving, naked, little boys and girls, who clustered round our horses, and stared up into our faces.

Lying about on the ground were several people—covered up with straw or shreds of clothing—some quite still, others wriggling about, apparently in great pain. Then it dawned on us that we had come across a village

stricken with yellow fever; the motionless, dead, and the others dying. A horrible stench pervaded the air, and in many places we saw that the ground had been dug afresh. Two or three niggers were digging a biggish hole, and two more passed close to us, unconcernedly carrying the almost nude body of a whitish woman, her shrivelled skin covered with brilliant yellow patches. Further off a group of boys and girls stood watching an old man rolling about on the ground in agony, but no one did anything to alleviate his sufferings, and he suddenly stiffened. I noticed that it was only the genuine negroes who were lively or working, but that none of the half-breeds were occupied in any way, all lying about in a state of abject dejection or collapse. I afterwards learnt that pure-blooded negroes have an almost absolute immunity from yellow fever, but that any admixture of white blood renders people liable to attack. Poor Wood—who had a very delicate stomach—turned and rode off, feeling terribly sick, but I got off my horse and gave it to a boy to hold, for I was curious to see what yellow fever was like. I saw quite enough to last a lifetime. A man was lying at the door of his hut, wailing piteously, his lips and nostrils blood red, and his tongue parched and protruding. I propped him up and he was at once deadly sick, and I got him some water but he could not swallow. Again he was sick—a hideous black vomit. I dipped a rag in water and tried to clear his mouth. His skin seemed on fire and his eyes screwed up like a ferret's. Then he seemed to choke and I could do no more. I laid him down and after some violent convulsions he lay still, dead. Just inside his hut was the body of a young woman. She had been dead for some hours, her skin was as yellow as saffron, whilst, almost touching her, two little girls were playing with a small kitten. Then some niggers came in, lifted her up and carried her away, pulled off her red

striped petticoat and yellow jacket, threw her into a pit, and shovelled earth over her, bringing back the clothes to the hut. I began to feel squeamish, too, by this time, for the sight of the pigs rootling up the new graves gave me a horror, whilst the stench would have sickened a vulture. And yet I could not bear to ride away; it seemed so heartless. However, I rejoined Wood, who had waited a few hundred yards off, and, riding on, we struck the broad high road leading to the capital, where we met strings of carriages full of gay Brazilians coming back from a sea-side place to which the fashion of Rio flocks in the evening. The contrast struck me painfully: the giggling, flirting crowd; and, scarce two miles away, the graves, the niggers filling in the earth, the dead woman, the little girls—playing with their cat, and the pigs intent on their loathsome feast.

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During our stay in Rio an incident happened to which I will now allude, though the curious psychological sequel to it was far off. I had been sent ashore in charge of the night cutter to bring off officers, the quay, even at that time, being crowded with loafers of all sorts. As the boat sheered alongside the two bowmen—whose oars had been tossed in—sprang on to the quay, and vanished up a dark alley. My coxswain dashed after them tiller in hand, but they were gone before he could overhaul them, so he returned to the quay, where, the officers having assembled, we shoved off and went back to the ship. Of course there was trouble about the deserters and I was had up before the Skipper and disrated from midshipman to naval cadet—a very great disgrace, and attended with most serious consequences in one's after career—whilst the coxswain, who was a petty officer, was also disrated to able seaman. He was the man I have before alluded to, omitting his name.

There was not a particle of justice for this severe punishment beyond the fact that the two men who had deserted were not of my regular boat's crew, and it might be held to be his fault and mine that we had not noticed it before leaving the ship, although it had been dark. I felt so bitter about it that I thought the coxswain only did what I should have been glad to do myself, namely, desert the first chance he got. The fact was, the Skipper was feeling alarmed at these wholesale desertions, fully expecting to be hauled over the coals by the Admiralty, and was only too glad to make a scapegoat of any one.

And now for the sequel. Seven years after this I was one night stranded on the bank of an Australian river which had suddenly risen in flood, and seeing a man on horseback some distance off hailed him, and asked him if he could find the ford. As bushrangers were numerous at that particular time it was never safe to accost any one at night, so I was not surprised that he delayed answering for some time. But finally, with what light there was, he seemed to decide I was not a dangerous person, and drew near. In an instant, though I certainly could not see his face except that he had a rough beard and wore his hat pulled over his eyes, the Rio scene came before me and I knew it was my old coxswain. But he did not know me, and it required tact on my part to divulge my identity, as, having deserted, he was always in a delicate position. But we soon came to understand each other, and rode on for many miles together after crossing the river. He was getting on well, and already owned a small station of his own.

An amusing incident of our voyage to the Cape of Good Hope was Wood tumbling overboard while we midshipmen were being drilled aloft. The weather was fine, hardly any wind, the vessel scarcely going

two knots, so that Wood, swimming comfortably after us, was not in the least danger. But to save the son of the First Lord was too great a chance to be lost, so in two seconds after the alarm of "Man overboard!" at least three officers and six bluejackets were furiously hauling off their clothes to go after him. But Bell, our Irish Lieutenant, determined not to be forestalled in the rescue, flinging off nothing, went overboard all standing, when he joined Wood in a few strokes, and swam about comfortably with him, with no greater risk of being drowned than had they been bathing on Southsea beach. Still this did not deter others from joining them, for in less than half a minute there were some five or six in the water, all perfect swimmers, so that the whole thing became ludicrous. Then Deane lost his temper, and, roaring out, wanted to know how many more d——d fools were going overboard, and would they please stop their tomfoolery! Meanwhile, the main-yard had been squared, the cutter lowered, and, in a few minutes, rescued and rescuers—the latter looking extremely foolish—were alongside again. Needless to say no one got even a leather medal out of the affair.

A messmate of mine called Dobbin, our second master, a very truthful man, told me of a curious coincidence. He was mate of a merchant ship, and somewhere between the Cape and Australia he caught an albatross, fastened a brass label under one of its wings, with a fine wire, on which he had roughly stamped the date of this capture. Two years after—in another ship at the same time of year and about the same latitude and longitude—he caught the same bird again, with his label still attached. He re-dated it and let it go once more. It is curious to think that sea birds have some instinct by which they return to particular localities, on the open sea, after the breeding season.

My impressions of Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope, are very vivid, and I remember well the disgust there was in Capetown by hordes of German ruffians—the disbanded remnants of the Mercenary German Legion got together in England for the Crimean War—being sent out to South Africa to get rid of them. These offscourings of German cities had become a terror in the neighbourhood of Gosport, where they robbed and murdered at their own sweet will, as might be expected of them from their origin. The result was that the Government of Cape Colony was doing its utmost to move them away from the more settled portions of the country near Capetown, and get them planted on the outer fringes of civilisation, in the more congenial society of the lower-class Boers. It is unquestionable that up to that time the Dutch of the Cape were a peaceful and law-abiding people, and might have been in South Africa, what their ancestors were in the United States of America, a thrifty, industrious community, had it not been for the moral and physical contamination of these Germans.

At the Cape of Good Hope hospitality is proverbial, and I spent some nights at Stellenbosch, with people my family had known in England. I saw there a Kaffir girl who had run away from that tribe (name forgotten) which had been seized with the extraordinary suicidal mania then rampant among the natives. The direct cause of this terrible epidemic was the brutality and lust of the Boer farmers, whose excesses it is impossible to describe in English literature.

For a great medicine man had arisen amongst these Kaffirs, and had persuaded them that if they would all simultaneously commit suicide they would return to life—in a few hours mighty and invincible warriors, able to rid their country, once for all, of the hated Boer. Though it seems incredible, it is a well-ascertained fact that fifty

thousand men of this one tribe actually carried out this terrible advice in the hope of escaping from tyranny, but, alas! only to leave great tracts of their land uninhabited, which were immediately occupied by their oppressors, whilst thousands of women, if old, were left to starve; or, if young, were taken on as "helps" in the Boer farms.

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Riding out from Simon's Bay one day, somewhere at the back of Table Mountain, I came down into a broad valley, lying between rocky hills, with a shallow lake in the centre of it and forests on three sides; in fact, an ideal place for a native camp. Coming round a corner of the wood I found myself unexpectedly amongst huts, made of sticks and grass, some of them covered with strips of tarpaulin and canvas. The place seemed deserted, so I tied my horse to a tree and went to explore. But at the entrance to one of the huts I was confronted by a human being, as the occupation of cooking something in a pot denoted it to be, but so abnormal in a particular development as to make one wonder if it were, or what Evolution, and especially Selection, had been at to produce it. It was though evidently a woman, from the petticoat which hung over this astounding back, whilst below this garment appeared a pair of attenuated brown legs, uniform in size from ankle to knee. Hearing my step, she straightened herself and, turning round, produced a curious "cluck" in her throat, which I have no doubt meant, "How do you do!" Then with a friendly gesture, she pointed to the pot in which I could see that food of some kind was boiling.

She was about three feet six inches tall, her head certainly not less than a fifth of the whole, her face copperish yellow, eyes somewhat oblique, mouth large, and jawbone going back under the ear like a crank, teeth

long, prominent, and the colour of a tobacco quid, hair scant and black, straggling over her face and forehead. The aforesaid petticoat and a linen bodice, tied jauntily round her middle by a bit of red rag, formed her entire costume, leaving her sufficiently *décolletée* for even a London ball-room. For ornaments there were patches of red paint on her cheeks and a belt of beads round what I assumed was her waist. She constantly repeated a word sounding like " Saan," which I learnt afterwards is the name given to Bushmen. She was not pure Hottentot; that I knew at once, from her straight hair. But the Boers have many things to answer for, amongst others a custom of catching and enslaving these diminutive women, who—when they can—escape and return to their own tribe, mothers of a half-breed.

Inviting me to sit down the little woman fished up a bit of meat out of the pot on a piece of stick and offered it to me. As it smelt good and fresh—evidently a bit of deer of some kind—I had no hesitation in eating it. She seemed active enough, but as I contemplated her dorsal proportions I saw how impossible it would be for midshipmen to run over the futtock shrouds if Nature had designed them on this plan. I rose to go, but by signs she detained me, and I went round the little camp on a tour of inspection. Behind the huts was a small enclosure, in which were a few scraggy calves and a pig or two; whilst in a hut, bigger than the others and barricaded in by bushes, was a number of small girls and boys, all devoid of clothing, some asleep, some playing with bits of broken pots, whilst one boy, bigger than the rest, was carving in relief a very well drawn horse on a piece of hard wood. I was surprised at his skill, but less so afterwards, when I was shown some still better executed specimens of his drawing —on thin slabs of hardened clay. In fact, many of these small people seemed born draftsmen.

As I was again preparing to depart, a sound, resembling screeching more than human speech, heralded the arrival of the rest of the tribe; so I waited to see the new arrivals, when, headed by a herd of small, lean cows and a few skeleton sheep, a group of some ten or fifteen diminutive men and women emerged from the wood. I saw at once that the women were all built on the same inconvenient lines as my friend of the meat-pot, one or two of them even exceeding her in this exaggerated structure. But the men, though equally short and ugly, were not so greatly deformed in this respect. On the other hand, their faces were far more repellent than those of the women, with an expression of abiding cunning, whilst their movements, and even their voices, bore a marked resemblance to their half-brothers, the baboons, who might be seen hopping about the rocks of the mountains behind their village.

But though they looked so unattractive and fierce they were civil enough, whilst one, who looked more like a Malay than a Bushman, speaking English fairly well, begged me to stay and eat, and as I was curious to learn more about these people, I willingly remained. He was an intelligent person, and, though the jargon he spoke was a mixture of low Dutch and pidgin English, I understood him better than I do the School Board children in my own Surrey village. From his description of the breed to which he belonged, there can be nothing more adulterated in the world; strains—originally Portuguese—crossed and recrossed by Dutch, German, Hottentot, Bush, Malay, Kaffir, and Negro blood. He told me this little tribe was by no means pure Bushman, but an offshoot of a larger tribe who had vanished slowly, going north and dying out, and that probably there were not fifty other people like them in the whole Cape Colony. He said they still used small bows and poisoned

arrows, the poison extracted from plants and out of beetles, scorpions, and the venom of snakes. They believed in a future life; to be spent in a kind of happy hunting-ground, but he thought that now this idea had given place to a Paradise where there were to be no Boers, and to a Hell where there was nothing else, over which would preside a Boer with claws and a sjambok. It did not seem to strike him how needless it was to go out of Cape Colony to find this particular form of devil.

His own pedigree was a good illustration of the aforesaid cross-breeding, for his father was the son of a Boer by a Malay slave woman; his own mother a cross between a Hottentot and an American whaling captain; his great-uncle at that moment a Dutch minister, and his great-aunt, the minister's sister, still a "help" in a married Boer's establishment beyond the Praal, and mother to three of his children. I asked him who the lady might be who I had first met, and he replied that she was his own half-sister, his father having married a Bushman woman. I found a note of this pedigree in the flyleaf of an old French novel, or I should long ago have forgotten it.

I saw something of Boer peasant life at different times of my visits to South Africa, and I am honestly of conviction that nothing exists more hypocritical, ignorant, and superstitious than the average Boer farmer. His moral sense, as regards native women, is non-existent, and his dealings with white women are only circumscribed by the fear of being shot—from behind a wall—by another Boer. His manners are churlish, his temper sullen, his cunning phenomenal, his personal habits filthy, his ideas of decorum lower than those of Esquimaux, Patagonians, or the Blacks of Australia. An household cat has more instincts of decency and more knowledge

of hygiene. Of course all the above does not apply to better-class Boers, who have lived in towns and have acquired civilised habits, but I believe it is a fair picture of the average Boer farmer and small settler.

We left the Cape with very great regret, and putting to sea shaped our course for Australia.

CHAPTER VIII

SYDNEY: NEW SOUTH WALES

Short tack again—Our literary tastes—Stormy petrels and their mysterious ways—Sea marvel of "white water"—Amsterdam Islands—The Skipper's wig—Sydney Harbour—Insiders and outsiders—Difficulties social and other through want of decent clothing—Sir William Denison and his family—Alfred of that ilk—Adventures on horseback—Disastrous archery—"Young ass and young fool"—Sympathy with assassins.

OUT on the rolling sea again—blowing a gale of wind, as is usual, off the Cape of Good Hope—the frigate staggering along under reefed topsails and reefed courses, main-deck ports secured, guns with their muzzles lashed up to the ring-bolts overhead, and a hawser stretched along behind their breech. On the lee quarter the grim, precipitous Cape towers up against the red light of an angry evening sky, and, near at hand, a column of water shoots upwards—fifty or a hundred feet high—as the mighty waves crash down on the Bellows Rock, that outpost of the great African Continent, standing like a solitary sentinel in the ocean.

Down in the midshipman's berth the old life again—weevily biscuit, ship's pork, salt horse, ship's cocoa with rings of cocoa-fat floating over its surface. Lying on the lockers are any who can find room, reading Boccaccio or Rabelais, in English, or racy bits of the Old Testament; "Humphry Clinker," "Roderick Random."

Outside the mess, skylarking or fighting, the midshipmen make merry, whilst every now and then some one comes down from the quarter-deck and reports that it is "blowing like blazes," the glass going down, and everything looks "beastly," and that the "wind-jammers" cannot play to-night because the ship's fiddler has come off drunk. My thoughts fly back to Stellenbosch; to the charming old Dutch farmhouse, where I had spent two most happy days, and rode with a girl, who sat a horse like Hippōna. I even envy my multi-bred Malay friend and his half-sister; for they, at least, will have food they can masticate; will sleep on dry, sweet-smelling grass and not in a hammock half soaked with salt water. Nor will they be roused out at midnight to go on deck and tramp about in the wet with bare feet, until four in the morning, nor be ordered to go aloft to see a reef taken in; or heave the log, when the knots on the log-line run out and cut your fingers like a knife; or worry about with a sextant for the Altitude of the Southern Cross.

It was during these gales off the Cape that I first made the acquaintance of that curious little bird, the Cape pigeon, stormy petrel, Mother Carey's chickens —all the same bird—whose choice of a home on tempestuous seas seems incomprehensible. For these birds rarely visit the land, except during the breeding season, but are practically for ever on the wing, just touching the water for a moment with their feet, but not long enough to rest their wings. Nor is this their only peculiar habit. I have seen their nests in small holes in rocky islands in the South Pacific, and noticed that neither cock nor hen ever leave them by day, but as night approaches they fly out and get their food out of the sea. There are hundreds of different sorts of petrels, some nearly as big as an albatross, some hardly larger than

a swallow. They are exquisitely shaped; their flight resembles a swift's, and their colouring is much the same, slatey grey trending off into steely blue. We caught some with hooks, but I look back now with horror on that and similar barbarities, for no one on board cared two straws about the beautiful creatures from an ornithological point of view. Petrels have a strong, sweet smell, like musk, or the patchouli one smells in Piccadilly, and the only purpose for which this has been acquired would seem to be to protect them from some land animal. I have seen numbers of rats on an islet off Norfolk Island—the home of millions of sea birds—and as those rats must live on birds or birds' eggs, it has struck me that the strong smell may make the rats sniff, and that this sniffing noise gives the sitting birds timely warning. Or perhaps the cock-birds like the smell, which is not impropable, as the hens smell far stronger than the cocks. More patchouli!

The derivation of the name Petrel is curious, and is also rather a misnomer, for the bird has been so called after that Apostle who attempted to walk on the Sea of Galilee, but failed, whereas these inhabitants of the stormiest seas seem to walk over the waves without risk. Sailors call them Mother Carey's chickens, also a Biblical derivation, for in French they are called *Oiseaux de Notre Dame*, and in Latin *Mater cara*. It is a strange sight, these small birds flying through the sprays of mighty waves, borne up by a motive power unknown to science; vanishing as night comes on, and reappearing with the first streak of dawn from God alone knows where. Sometimes at night one thinks one can catch their lonely cry—like that of a peewit—rising over the bulwarks close to one's ear, but, strain your eyes as you will, you see no sign of the phantom that produced the sound.

Fruitful of marvels are those wide expanses of ocean,

and truly may it be said that those who go down to the sea in ships see the wondrous works of God. Once we passed through a great patch of what we call "white water," traversed by broad lanes of dark sea, sometimes straight for miles, sometimes crossing and re-crossing like lines in the human hand. At night the spectacle is astonishing, the sea alive with millions upon millions of water fireflies, darting about like swarms of gnats, all bent on their own mysterious business: creatures born, perhaps only to live for a few minutes, so minute as to be individually invisible to the naked eye, but distinctly to be felt by the hand. With the microscope, however, they can be seen, looking like attenuated hairs, or like globules of jelly, round, oblong, all shapes and sizes, with smooth or serrated edges, expanding and contracting with rapid pulsation. But these patches are not always white; in parts of the Pacific I have seen them red, and in the China Seas quite yellow. The nature of these creatures varies greatly, sometimes appearing more vegetable than animal, dwellers of that undiscoverable border land, where seaweed and the infusoria meet. So bright is the light reflected from these floating masses that on a dark night the sky above the horizon will be illuminated for several degrees with a curious glow, such as one sees above ice-fields and floating bergs.

We sighted St. Paul's Island, one of the Amsterdam group, passing within a mile or so of the eastern end, where the sea has broken down the outer wall of what was once a great volcano, and has thus formed a small, sheltered bay. Wrecks—leaving castaways and sometimes marooned men—have been so frequent on this solitary spot that many ships call in, on passing, to see if assistance is required. The neighbouring island, Amsterdam, some fifty miles off, is devoid of any

indigenous life, but castaways have from time to time been found there also. Numbers of rats and cats, who must live by eating each other, swarm over the land, whilst a few goats manage to get a living off the scanty grass, and seem to get on with their brother islanders. It is the home of millions of sea birds—puffins, penguins, petrels, albatross, gannet, frigate-birds, and all the host of ocean's feathered inhabitants.

There being no sign of human life on St. Paul's we stood on, and little occurred—according to my barren log-book—but the usual reefing and furling of sails, holystoning of decks, and flogging a man or two by way of variety, or just to remind the crew they were serving Her Majesty. But even out of elements so little calculated to produce merriment as flogging, mirth may arise. For one Cummings, a marine, had been duly seized up to the gratings to receive a trifle of forty-eight lashes, with the Skipper, officers, and men assembled to witness it. On these occasions the Article of War relating to the particular crime to be dealt with is read out by the Captain, and—in token of respect for these semi-divine ordinances—every one uncovers his head. At the right moment off came the Skipper's old and battered cocked hat, but alas! the irreverent wind playfully blew his yellow wig all on one side, necessitating on his part a violent clutch to prevent it going overboard, which, with one pious and simultaneous wish, we all hoped might happen. But, so stern is the sense of discipline, that not a smile was visible on any face except that of Cummings, who had turned his head round and was looking at the Skipper, and knowing that he could not order one single extra lash to be laid on his back—over and above the regulation maximum of forty-eight—burst out into a loud guffaw. This was the first official intimation we received that our autocrat wore a wig, though every

one knew it unofficially half an hour after he had joined the ship at Chatham.

* * * * *

It was the 1st of July when we sighted those grand cliffs—the Sydney Heads—which guard the entrance to Port Jackson, the harbour of Sydney. What memories of my early youth are conjured up by the name of the capital of New South Wales! happy days, kindness from total strangers, curious adventures, life-long impressions. For—for the next four years—my ship was frequently in and out of Sydney Harbour, sometimes making long stays—swinging round our moorings in Farm Cove, the man-of-war anchorage—and sometimes only making a flying visit.

In Sydney Society there were more than the ordinary class distinctions, arising from the partial taint of convict blood. A broad social generalisation was known as "Insiders and Outsiders," the last word having since been generally adopted in England, though, no doubt, it originated in Sydney. But even the Insiders had their still more exclusive "insides"—the very ganglia of the Body Social—whilst "Outsiders" had "insides" as well. These distinctions seemed arbitrary and often ridiculous, for to any one approaching these sets without bias there appeared nothing to choose between them. Again the Official class stood aloof from people just as good as themselves, which further produced cleavage, whilst the privileged Squatters held the Urban classes to be chiefly robbers. But as far as the bulk of naval men were concerned these distinctions made no difference, for the women, the all-essential portion of the community to them, were equally lively and jolly, whether their fathers owned sheep-runs or kept warehouses. But, to be candid, I cannot say that we viewed their fathers, brothers, and male cousins with such all-embracing impartiality as we did their female

relatives, for, as in all new countries, increased opportunities for culture and the female aptitude for acquiring good manners more rapidly than do men, placed their women far ahead of them.

At that time there was a large leaven of "lag" blood in New South Wales; the sins of the fathers being, however, visited on the children in exact ratio to the money these children had either inherited or had subsequently made. But taint stuck closest where the crime had been against property, and, whilst it was rather a social distinction to be descended from some notorious highwayman of Bagshot Heath who had "come out" amongst the first convicts to Botany Bay—say in 1788, with Governor Phillips—it conferred none to have a father who had been "lagged"—in 1850—for forgery or theft.

At this period of my life—and in many stages since—want of money was the chief thorn in my flesh. I was always hard up and yet did not like to come down on my father for more money, knowing full well how tight that commodity was at home, with my elder brothers going into the Army, my younger ones at school, and with governesses for my sisters.

Looking back I see what the want of good clothes did for many of my messmates, quite apart from personal vanity. Hunger—to a right-minded lad—is less of a trial than shabby and shrunken garments. Many youngsters go to the dogs—some temporarily, some permanently—simply because they have no decent uniform or plain clothes to appear in ashore, or have, perhaps, too rapidly grown out of the things with which they have left home. The World primarily judges us by our clothes, and Society is never disposed to be lenient to persons with frayed cuffs and trousers bagged at the knee. But even with the strictest self-denial I never had enough money

at this time to keep up decent appearances, much less to accept invitations to dinner at houses, say, five or six miles distant, entailing a cab. Pinch and starve as I would, sixpence or a shilling for washing a shirt, two shillings a pair of trousers, and fourpence a pocket-handkerchief, made a lamentable hole in my resources, whilst £2 10s. for a pair of new shoes spelt bankruptcy and rendered life a puzzle. How fondly I nursed my uniform, and how we struggled on together!—No. 1 suit never seeing the light of day if by any possibility No. 2 would answer the purpose; No. 2 stowed away if No. 3, shabby and greased-stained, with patches of tar on the knees from running the rigging, could pass muster without my leave being stopped for being untidy. Had it not been for wearing white ducks in summer I cannot imagine to what straits I should have been reduced, for my cloth trousers were visibly climbing up my legs by inches every six months, and but for my ducks I should have exposed my shins. But ducks were my salvation, thanks to the thoughtfulness of my outfitter, who appeared to have originally designed them for a man of six foot six, so that as they shrank and shrank with frequent washings, by the time I was eighteen they had reached about the right length for my 5 ft. 8½ inches.

In spite of these heavy social disabilities I was very happy in Australia. I got to know plenty of people—besides my family connections, the Deas Thompsons—such as Dumaresques, Russells of Ravensworth, Sir William Maclean, Sir Daniel Cooper, Holyoak-Bayleys, the Mitchells, Allens of Toxteth, and a host of others, and especially Mr. Mort, who, I think, was then a wine merchant in MacQuarrie Street, and has been since the owner of Sydney Dock. He used to lend me a fiery grey steed which invariably ran away with me, and frequently kicked me off; once, notably, in a crowded street in

Sydney, when the wheel of a large dray passed over my hat as I lay in the road with it still on my head; rather a narrow shave.

Sir William Denison, a kind, courteous man, was then Governor of New South Wales. He had two daughters, one of whom, years older than myself, I adored, because I knew by some boyish instinct that she did not care that my trousers bagged at the knees and that my jacket shrank up under my arms. The Governor's brother and Private Secretary, Alfred Denison, was an overpowering swell, and I always felt uncomfortable when his supercilious eye fell on my ragged attire or on the patches on my shoes. He was the first of his type that had risen on my horizon, and I took him at his own valuation. He was immeasurably more haughty and condescending than the Governor, and I do not remember that Sydney loved him. At the same time he was distinctly absurd in himself, got up usually in a white waistcoat with little pink flowers on it, his handkerchief reeking in perfume, his broad flat feet half hidden by snow-white spats. He thought that outside the light of his smiling approval all was social darkness, and indeed this was the effect he produced on people generally in New South Wales, as if he alone could confer distinction, and as if the six or seven hundred thousand persons on whom his smile never shone, were of no more account than as many fleas on the back of a Laplander. He was, however, not an uncommon type of officialdom abroad, rude to those below, and servile to those above them.

Riding parties, archery, and dances were frequent at Government House, and to all of these many of us were constantly invited. On one of these riding occasions a very absurd disaster befel me, under circumstances when Julius Cæsar himself would have appeared ridiculous. I had been invited to ride with Miss Denison, Sir

William's eldest daughter, and had duly presented myself at the House at the appointed time. I was certainly not an expert rider, nor had I ever pretended to be, for my father only once owned a horse of any kind, and that some fifteen years before I was born, so, beyond an occasional mount at some of my cousins' places, and rides on donkeys at Boulogne, I had not had very great experience in the saddle. In consequence when an extremely frisky little animal, dancing round from the stables on its hind-legs, presented itself as my mount, I had some misgivings as to how long it would be before we parted company. Miss Denison's pony was a far quieter animal, and having hoisted her into her saddle, with difficulty and much awkwardness, I prepared to get into my own. This was still more difficult, but aided by the groom and an orderly, I finally succeeded. But the instant his head was let go, away flew my beast, with what seemed to me the speed of a wolf and the action of a kangaroo, springing and bucking out of sheer devilry. I managed to stick on somehow, though the smooth, slippery saddle made it anything but easy, but turn him or stop him I could not. Then he got his head down, and to my horror I saw he was going straight for the archery targets, round one of which was a group of three or four people. As I drew near I saw one of them was Alfred the Great, and he, seeing the peril of being run down, skipped behind some trees, with what nimbleness his never-absent foppery would permit, where he crouched down, the ladies also taking shelter, for it was clear that the pony and I were just as likely to go through the targets as anywhere else. But an orderly—there were always orderlies about, picking up arrows or holding Alfred's poodle by a blue ribbon—stepped out and made a grab at my steed's reins, bringing him up with so sudden a jerk that I flew over his head, from the acquired momentum, turned a complete somer-

sault in the air and—landing in a sitting position on a bit of spiky grass—continued to slide along the ground in this posture like a clown in a pantomime. Unfortunately the grass was tougher than my very tight trousers, and before I had gone very far I was painfully aware how prickly grass can become. But in this supreme predicament my presence of mind did not desert me, for, though one of the girls, thinking I was hurt, came running up to my assistance, I sat still. Fortunately the girl was as sharp as a needle, her instinct telling her that something was wrong as I did not get up, and she turned away and went back to the others. Here some very excusable giggling took place, and at once she and the other girls left, so I was able to get up and make my retreat towards the wicket which led down to Farm Cove—where lay my ship—with Alfred Denison roaring with laughter behind me. I got on board: a gig just happening to be going off, and it is not difficult to imagine the chaff which greeted me when the terribly dilapidated state of my garments, which my short jacket did not suffice to hide, was discovered. The adventure became one of Alfred's stock stories, embroidered beyond recognition.

My next adventure at Government House was, however, far less pleasant. It was at an archery party, my partner the girl who had come to my rescue when I went over the pony's head. Somehow or other, an arrow slipped out of my hand, and, with the eccentricity often displayed by these missiles, flew off at a tangent and inserted itself in an arrow-collecting orderly, who immediately flung himself on the ground, and began to bellow: the arrow having gone through his calf, the point protruding several inches on the other side. Of course there was a panic, for no one at that distance could see where he had been hit. An old lady fell all of a heap on

the grass, Sir William tried to catch her and fell over her, Alfred put his arms round the waists of the two nearest girls he could reach, and our Skipper set to work damning me roundly. However, I did not stop to listen to those old familiar expressions—which had so often saluted me in the main-top—but flew off to where a group was already forming round the wounded man, consisting of a gardener or two, and some of the coachmen from the carriages waiting in the avenue. The orderly, a big, red-faced Irish artilleryman, was still on the ground, still bellowing and imploring the Mother of Heaven to come down and save him, and begging the bystanders to "fetch a dochther, for the love of God"; all the while refusing to let any one touch the arrow. I, however, who had often stuck a pin into my own arm and calf, and knew it did not hurt much, even if imbedded several inches, felt no commiseration for him, and before he knew what I was about I stooped down, snapped off the head and drew out the other piece, which, by the way, I have kept to this day. It happened to be one of my partner's arrows which she had lent me. The orderly was none the worse for his wound. It healed up in a few days, but alas! I was wounded far more deeply, a wound *nullâ medicable herbâ*, for when I returned to the targets the Skipper had had time to work himself up into the proper state of indignation befitting the occasion. There and then, in the presence of all those people, he showered on me a torrent of abuse, "Young ass, young fool, why did I dare to come and shoot? Go on board immediately, sir, and tell the First Lieutenant to stop your leave!" So I had to slink away, once more through the wicket, conscious that all the eyes of polite Sydney were on me, with an uncomfortable feeling that as I obeyed this brutal, insulting, and altogether unnecessary order, I was stumbling over tussocks of grass, with my back

humping and my ears blood-red. How closely akin are some of us to many a poor wretch who has swung at Newgate!

I could have shot this old man at that moment with great pleasure, and shall never forget it as long as life lasts.

CHAPTER IX

NORFOLK ISLAND AND THE NEW HEBRIDES

Norfolk Island—Its fascination—Beautiful scenery—Its terrible past—Wholesale osculation—*Honi soit qui mal y pense*—Embarrassing situation for Sir William Denison—His Staff help him out—Contrast in manners of Norfolk Island men and women—Pitcairn Islanders—Mutiny of the *Bounty*—Missionary effort—Abominable conduct of sailor men—Soap, tobacco, and religious books—Fight between whale, thrasher and sword-fish—Spreading the Gospel—Massacre, as usual—A cannibal delicacy.

WE made a long stay in Sydney on that occasion, and were not sorry when we heard that we were once more bound for sea, none more pleased than the Skipper, for a very large number of our men had deserted, actuated quite as much by a wish to get away from the cat as by the attraction of the gold-fields. Our destination was Norfolk Island, the object of the expedition being to convey Sir William Denison, who, having jurisdiction over the British Pacific Islands, was going there to inaugurate laws. For the year before the Pitcairn Islanders, the descendants of the mutineers of the *Bounty*, who had grown too numerous for their original home, had been transferred from that island to Norfolk Island, a veritable Paradise, for the earth contains no more chosen spot for the habitation of man. I was fortunate enough to be selected by Sir William Denison to accompany him ashore, and remained with him during

his stay on the island, a visit which, on me, has left an undying impression.

The island is about thirteen miles long by six broad, rising steep out of the Pacific Ocean, and is about eight hundred miles to the northward and eastward of Sydney. It is totally unlike any other island in the Pacific, either geologically or in its fauna, and, when discovered, there was no animal of any kind on it. It was then one vast park, with broad, undulating sweeps of grass and magnificent timber, pines between two and three hundred feet in height and thirty to thirty-five feet in circumference, and a species of palm, called a cabbage palm, with very little reason, for there is nothing it resembles less. In the north lies the double-headed Mount Pitt, about one thousand feet high, but the average of the island is not more than three hundred and fifty feet above sea, with a depression in the centre considerably less than that. The soil is a marvel of fertility, and now, under cultivation, produces every kind of crop —guavas, bananas, pineapples, peaches, oranges, lemons, and many other fruit trees growing wild. But this lovely spot had been made into the nearest approach to hell that the imagination can conceive, for the most dangerous convicts of Botany Bay had been transported there, so that the worst crimes known to human nature were of constant occurrence. More than two-thirds of these desperate characters lived permanently in chains; floggings were as frequent as on board the *Iris*, whilst hangings, at the unfettered discretion of the Prison Governor, were part of the daily routine. But things at last became impossible, the Home authorities interfered, and the convicts were transported elsewhere, whilst in their place the harmless, ingenuous Pitcairn Islanders, to the number of some two hundred, were plumped down on the island.

Disembarkation here was at all times difficult, but in bad weather became impossible, and, as it was coming on to blow when we got there, Sir William Denison and his *suite*, myself and Heneage included, had considerable difficulty in getting ashore. But backing the ship's cutter in carefully and watching for an opportunity, we managed to jump on to the rocks and were whisked up out of the swirl of the sea by the islanders. Then a scramble, up a rough stair in the cliff, and we stood looking down on the fairest scene, surrounded by nearly the whole population of the island, the women in the unconventional dress of persons who have turned straight out of bed, and the men in trousers and shirt sleeves.

It is difficult to describe the delight with which these simple-hearted folk received us; the women, old and young, incontinently throwing their arms round the necks of all of us, without distinction of rank or age, kissing us more vehemently than had we been long-lost brothers. The good old Governor seemed extremely embarrassed, for it was certainly an undignified position for a kind of Moses coming to give new laws, and somewhat calculated to lessen awe for the Lawgiver. For a moment he looked angry and, no doubt, had his Edicts been on stone, he would there and then have broken them to pieces in the presence of such levity, but as they were on paper, and, still more, in a bag which I was carrying, they escaped destruction. However, he quickly recovered his temper, and being light of heart, set to work—but with some discrimination—to return the salutes. In fact, he seemed to think that there was no other method to get to the people's hearts, the bounden duty of all rulers, and as we all agreed with him, we acted on this principle all the rest of the time we were in the island; giving ourselves up to our duty with such ardour that the Governor declared he had never been more ably assisted by his

Staff—in any part of the world—in establishing friendly relations.

The type of these people is very much what may be seen in many islands in the Pacific, where white have crossed with the Kanakas; the men loosely knit, shambling creatures, sallow of skin, and sometimes handsome; the women, with more colour, more vivacity, an intense appreciation of life, remarkable eyes, thick, sensuous lips born with a smile. Their figures, like Kanakas generally, are good though rather short; their voices soft, and their manners set to please.

This, generally speaking, may be taken as the Pitcairn or Norfolk Island type, entirely in harmony with its environments of strong-smelling flowers: fruits which grow without trouble: waters that invite bathing: forests and shady glades that suggest repose by day and impel rambling in the warm nights.

Surrounded by these amiable people, still hanging round our necks, we now began our short walk to the Settlement, which we soon saw; lying in a park-like country, and it seemed impossible to realise that so short a time before, this heavenly spot had been the scene of such unspeakable brutality and crime in its convict-haunted days. Still the convict buildings—consisting of a gloomy-looking prison and several detached houses, with a very fair residence for the Prison Governor—told their tale; whilst, close by, rough piles of stones marked the graves of poor wretches who had escaped from captivity, by the hand of the hangman or their own. The remains of the gibbet and the stone platform on which it had stood were still there, but already grass was growing on it and goats were cropping round its base. Close by stood the building reserved for the most dangerous criminals, where they had sat chained, year in year out, only to be brought out to be tied to

the triangle to be flogged, or hurried off to die on the dread platform. On the other side of the buildings stood a chapel, erected in grim irony for prayers to the All-Merciful, whilst beyond it was another burial-ground, for the warders of this hell, amongst them some who had been slain by the despairing prisoners, solely to earn escape, albeit with the rope.

Arrived in the Settlement the Governor and his A.D.C. took up their abode in the Residence, as it was called, but Heneage and I were lodged in the house of one of the leading families. To me the few days spent in this house were perfect bliss. How piously I wished that all the gales of the Pacific would now fall on the *Iris*, would blow every stick out of her and compel her to return to Sydney, jerry-masted, before attempting to re-embark us. The genuine kindness and simple affection of these islanders is difficult to describe, whilst their artless, unsophisticated manners, if portrayed in detail, would certainly convey a false impression of their morality. Married or single it was all the same: its very openness robbing it of suspicion. Of course I have heard other visitors to the island scoff at the innocence of such demonstrative love-making, but I can only give my own impressions; and looking back with wider knowledge, it is delightful to me to think that I was as likely to be right as those who thought badly of them. The men of the island did not strike us as so interesting as their sisters and cousins. There was nothing distinctive about them, whereas the women had a clear claim to originality, to which the extreme simplicity of their dress greatly contributed, consisting of a single square-cut garment made of their own home-spun cotton, occasionally adorned with stripes of coloured linen, sewn longitudinally on to them: the dress not always confined to the body, though some few wore a fillet high up under the breast, leaving the

lower part to lie in its natural folds, in Spartan simplicity, on their free-moving limbs. Their hair—generally decked with flowers, tied in a knot low down on the neck, or altogether loose on their shoulders—varied in colour from raven black to reddish brown, and seemed always luxuriant. But the Norfolk Island man was boorish, suspicious, and idle; his one idea seemed to be that the Government—by which he meant England—had had some sinister design in transplanting him to an island, where at least some manual labour would be necessary to keep him alive, instead of leaving him in Pitcairn, where the natural products of the soil, and chiefly the breadfruit, grew in sufficient quantities to keep him alive, lying on his back. We were all sick of the men in twenty-four hours. But this, again, may only have been a male point of view, for, some time after, I met two girls in Auckland, who had accompanied their father on missionary work to Norfolk Island, and they differed with me entirely, and declared the men were "quite nice," and their ways charming.

Accompanied by the daughter of our host I explored part of the island, and wonderfully beautiful it was, with forests of one of the most stately of all trees, the Norfolk Island pine. Sheep were mostly to be seen in the lower land, near the Settlement; but many of the cattle had taken to the bush and roamed at large. On the occasion of one of these rambles a rather untoward incident took place. We had gone a long way up the slopes of Mount Pitt, a fatiguing scramble through thick undergrowth, and, as the views were lovely in the extreme, had dawdled about longer than was wise, for evening had begun to fall and darkness to come on rapidly. So we made a hurried descent of the hill, and, coming to a rocky place, quite strange to my companion, we had to make the best of getting down anyhow and anywhere, being confronted, at last, by a considerable drop,

the depth of which it was impossible to gauge in the dark. We tried to go back, but we had already dropped down several places it would have been difficult or impossible to re-climb, so I decided to prospect, and began crawling down holding on to brushwood and roots. I soon found a footing, some fifteen feet lower, and I called to my friend to follow, which she did; but it was not easy, and in the attempt many bits of her dress were left behind on the bushes. But she reached me safely, and we stood on a narrow ledge wondering how we were to get down further. Below us was now as dark as night, with only tree-tops showing, but there was no help for it, and once more we began the descent. I had just planted my foot firmly, and was placing her foot on a projecting rock, when the bush she was holding on to gave way, and before I knew what had happened I found myself falling headlong down into the dark with the girl after me. But we did not roll far, probably not twenty feet, before we landed on a grass slope and came to a standstill. I jumped up and tried to pull her up, hoping she was unhurt; but she had sprained or twisted her ankle, and could not move without great pain. Beyond having torn my jacket I was none the worse; but she, in addition to her sprained ankle, had cut her arm, and it was bleeding freely. I pulled off my jacket and tore the sleeve out of my shirt, tore it again into strips and bound up her arm, and then took off one of my braces and wound it tight round her ankle, after having rubbed it as much as she could stand—for it gave her great pain—she all the time moaning and crying like a child. But after a while she said the pain was less, and managed to stumble along with my help. We were soon in comparatively open country, and after an hour's trudge saw some twinkling lights below us which we knew to be the Settlement, whilst out at sea, and looking as though close in shore,

was the long line of lights on the main-deck of the *Iris*. It was past midnight before we finally reached home.

Perhaps I may be permitted here briefly to explain who were these Pitcairn Islanders, for the story of the mutiny of the *Bounty* has already receded into the almost forgotten, strange and fascinating as it is. It is a wild romance of the sea, with an episode of horror in it, which has only once in the world had its parallel, namely, the slaughter of their husbands by the women of the Island of Lemnos.

In the year 1789 H.M.S. *Bounty* sailed from Otahiete, an island in the Pacific, carrying bread-fruit trees destined for the West Indies, when a mutiny broke out, chiefly caused through the disinclination of the crew to separate from their morganatic wives, whose society they had enjoyed for six months in that charming island. The mutineers, having captured the ship, placed their Captain (Bligh) in an open boat, with nineteen men who had remained loyal, and these twenty men, after a most marvellous boat journey of over four thousand miles, finally reached Timor, one of the Moluccas. The *Bounty* was taken to Taheite by the mutineers, where, unluckily for them, some few elected to remain. For being afterwards discovered there by another man-of-war, these men were tried, and, most of them, promptly hanged. But the *Bounty* had long before left Taheite, for those who remained in her, having laid in a sea-stock of wives and provisions, had sailed away, and had accidentally come across the rarely-visited island of Pitcairn. Here, finding that existence was possible without working, they burnt the *Bounty* and began life anew. But violence and crime soon broke out amongst them until their leader, one Adams, finding them incorrigible, conceived the simple expedient of getting their wives to murder them all. This he had no difficulty in persuading them to carry out, for they were

glad to be rid of such rascals, and, on a given night, all the men were killed. Adams then took charge of the women and children, instituted severe laws, and brought them all up well, for he was a religious man: or said he was. He died in 1829, and then an Englishman, called Nobbs, who had come amongst them some few years before and had married Adams's daughter, became the leader. He followed in the paths of Adams, and the islanders increased and multiplied and remained lost to the world. Then Admiral Moresby visited the island, in 1852, when Nobbs was sent home and ordained, returning to the island next year. But meanwhile the people had become too numerous for this small island, only two or three miles long by one or two wide, so that, in 1856, the British Government transplanted them to Norfolk Island, supplying them with two or three thousand sheep and many heads of cattle, together with five hundred horses and a large store of provisions. But now, having come within the pale of civilisation, it became necessary to organise their laws on a more regular basis. Hence Sir William Denison's mission.

This same Nobbs was about fifty-eight when I saw him on Norfolk Island. He struck me as an amiable, patriarchal old humbug, and, in some respects, no less puzzling than the community in general. There must have been about two hundred of these people about this time, though subsequently the island became quite populous; for Bishop Patteson founded a Mission Settlement there, and, in its wake, many beach-combers found their opportunity to squat, when demoralisation quickly spread in this delightful spot. But long before this the Denisonian laws and regulations had grown irksome, so that many returned to their dear old home, Pitcairn, with their families.

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After an all-too-brief stay Sir William and the rest of us once more embarked on board our ship and sailed for Auckland, New Zealand. For the islanders were short of some necessary provisions, which, having procured, we returned to Norfolk Island, but alas ! only for a few hours. That our partings from our friends there were sad need hardly be said ; and I can remember how sentimental I felt as, leaning over the taffrail, I saw the last peak of Mount Pitt vanish below the horizon. I thought that I had left something behind I should never know again, and I was right—for it exists nowhere else on the face of the globe.

More than two years after I had an ingenuously affectionate letter from the companion of my rambles. I have it still, scrawled on a rough sheet of foolscap, in writing that would not pass a School Board standard. But it breathes truth and sincerity, and, when I look at it, it conjures up a delightful memory.

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On our passage to Sydney we visited Lord Howe's Island, a curious and lonely spot. It had one solitary inhabitant, a white man, a veritable Robinson Crusoe, with goats and fowls, his food, fish and potatoes. He wanted nothing except to be left alone, and his wish was gratified.

We were not long in Sydney Harbour on this occasion, our next cruise of any interest taking us to the New Hebrides, a group of beautiful islands of volcanic origin, and for the most part inhabited by the fiercest and most warlike race of cannibals in the Pacific. Murders of missionaries had been of frequent occurrence in all the northern islands, especially in Tanna and Erromango ; but a more peaceful race inhabited the southernmost island, Aneiteum, which had in consequence become the

home of numbers of missionaries on the look-out for soft jobs. This they had evidently found, for when we visited the place it was already practically settled up, nearly all the natives professing some form of Christianity, and even sufficiently far advanced in the science of that faith to believe that those who differed from them a hair's breadth in its tenets must infallibly be damned. This, of course, to the missionaries, severally and individually, was very gratifying, as indicating the sincerity of native conviction.

There were very good paths all through the island, and the natives lived in perfect peace—not in villages, but in scattered huts—which alone indicated a high degree of mutual trust. Most of the missionaries had pleasant houses, and any number of willing converts—chiefly female—to attend to their wants. Trading schooners called frequently, and the missionaries—many of them—did a roaring trade in cocoanuts, copra, and other island products. Behind one house was a pile of thousands of cocoanuts, all collected by the willing hands of converts. Generally, there was a good whaleboat near at hand to ship these goods; whilst flocks of ducks waddled about on the rocks, and hens scratched in the sand. There were an astonishing number of semi-white babies and children running about, but one of the missionaries explained that the crews of these trading schooners were a lamentably bad lot. A jovial old Scotchman, who gave us most of the information about the goings on of these gentry, said, "Mon! they are just awfu'. Ye dinna ken what sailor men can be!" But if I did not then I do now.

This old man was, I believe, a missionary more by conviction than profession—some of the other missionaries said, by necessity. He did not belong to any particular Missionary Society, but was there on his own hook. And

a very good hook, too, I thought, for he was a practical evangeliser; could teach the natives to do carpentering, even to the building of whale-boats, he himself in some former state—in his graceless days—having been carpenter in a whale-ship, so that in addition to building boats he could knock up barrels, the trading schooners bringing him what we call at sea "Shakes"—that is, the staves of barrels and the iron hoops separate. His converts seemed a particularly prosperous community, kept pigs, building their own styes, and when a whale came ashore—not an infrequent occurrence, as the neighbouring seas of Aneiteum swarm with these mamals—they, assisted by the old sea-missionary, boiled down the blubber, getting rum and tobacco, knives and cotton, in exchange. He was a very sensible old man, and if he is alive now must be, I should think, about ninety years old—which is quite likely—for he was himself a sober, tough, old Hieland man from some remote part of the far North. He had a fair knowledge of the language, which, however, he could learn even then in books, for translations of the Bible had been already made, and also, I think, a rough dictionary. But even in this small island there were different dialects. One great pull he had over other missionaries was that it was not incumbent on him to send home long reports to any religious body in Scotland or anywhere else, to bring spiritual consolation to poor widows and starving crofters, contributing their sorely-needed shillings to support some labourer in the field. Besides that, if this old missionary did succeed in spreading the Gospel off his own bat, albeit, by trading in rum and tobacco, where was the harm in it? Surely, the quality of the Gospel could not be affected thereby any more than its truth can be impugned by the preaching of a Borgia. Strange to say—though one would hardly have expected it of

him—he rigidly enforced personal cleanliness amongst his converts, though, apparently, not insanely addicted to it himself. Of this I had ocular demonstration. Not far from his house was a stream of water forming a deep pool. Disporting themselves in entire *abandon*, their clothes drying on the bank, I came across several of his disciples, all women and children, scrubbing themselves with soap. It appeared to be the Saturday wash. One small chap, running about on the bank, had the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet as white as my own, and I pondered on what he had told me about the schooner-men, and understood where the trouble came in.

The natives of Aneiteum are of the Negroid type, ugly in our eyes, but with beauty, too—of a kind—the beauty of graceful movement and well set-on heads. In pre-missionary days they were treacherous and murderous; but now, under the Christianising influence of petticoats for the women and trousers for the men, are merely all idle, and mostly thieves and drunkards. As regards their marriages, too; whereas in the old days, the best women fell captive to the club and arrows of the bravest men, now they go for so many pigs or so much copra.

Whilst in the Bay of Aneiteum, we witnessed a curious sight. A large whale had got enclosed inside the coral reefs, and had been followed in by two smaller fish, but both of large proportion; one commonly known as a thrasher; the other a sword-fish, with a lance six to eight feet long. They were attacking the whale with terrific ferocity: the thrasher lifting up its ponderous tail and bringing it down on the whale's head whenever he attempted to rise for air: the sword-fish operating underneath him with his terrible lance. Finally, after rushing round the bay in search of an

outlet, the whale flung himself on the beach, blinded with rage, his blood dyeing the waters round him, where he remained immovable, rapidly bleeding to death. His enemies, however, did not follow him into shallow water, for we saw them swimming away out through the reef in company, doubtless well pleased with their two hours' fight, and at having rid the seas of one more of their dangerous foes. For the whales in these seas are not the harmless creatures of Northern waters, but are armed with jaws of immense size and prodigious teeth, and live on other fish. Visiting this bay again, weeks after this, the remains of the huge fish were still to be seen, and smelt too! for our enterprising evangelist, aided by his friends, was boiling down the blubber. But, unfortunately, not having enough casks to store it in, a great quantity was lost.

We visited most of the New Hebrides group, thirty or forty islands in all, some with large, active volcanoes, from two to five thousand feet high. The scenery in these islands is magnificent, especially in Tanna, where the great Kauri pine reaches an extraordinary size. The inhabitants vary a good deal, both in habits and colour, and it is observable that the lighter they get, the more advanced they are in civilisation, as regards dress and ornaments. But as to what, for a better definition, must be called their morals, these seem to be in the inverse ratio of their colour, for there is far more conjugal fidelity amongst the Negroid than amongst the Kanaka, or light-skinned races. It would not be difficult to construct a moral thermometer in the islands, taking the Negroid temperament at, say, 60° Fahrenheit, and ranging up to boiling point for the Samoans and Kanakas generally.

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It was in the Island of Tanna that I first saw real

fighting. My ship had gone up to investigate the killing of a missionary, the point being not so much whether he had deserved martyrdom from the natives—for there were certainly two sides to the story—as to enforce the sanctity of a white life on these savage minds. So, with this moral object in view, we landed a strong force, set fire to their villages, shot as many savages as remained to be shot, and carried off a chief, who, by strategy, had fallen into our hands. Our method was simple. Having ascertained from the missionaries of Aneiteum that there was deadly enmity between two tribes, situated at different ends of the Island of Tanna, we made friends with the tribes who we elected to assume were innocent, for the time being, of killing and eating missionaries, and, with the aid of a native convert, who spoke about ten words of English, induced some of these savages to embark on board our ship, and serve as allies with us in the coming struggle. They seemed only too pleased at the alluring prospect of securing man's flesh—loving it as a City Father does turtle—and, with a band of white calico bound above their elbows in order that we might distinguish friend from foe, were disembarked, on the enemy's shore with their weapons, leaping into the water even before the boat's bows had touched the rocky beach, when, yelling in a diabolical manner, they rushed into the jungle, which grew close down to the sea. A terrific din ensued, but before our men could land, the enemy appeared to have given way and fled, so that when the bluejackets got up to the village—not a hundred yards from the beach—there was not a soul to be seen. But fiendish screeches and yells were to be heard far up the mountain side, as if hell had broken loose, as indeed it had for them.

The villages being set on fire, the party returned, but meanwhile some of the enemy had got round

a point to intercept the retreat. But a volley or two scattered these poor wretches; whilst two or three of them, cut off from their own party, rushed out on to a reef a few yards off the shore. They were immediately followed by the friendlies, and as it was impossible for our men to fire at them without risk to these, a hand-to-hand fight began, fought out with astonishing valour, the huge clubs whirling over the heads of the combatants. But the friendlies were greatly at a disadvantage by having to climb out of waist-deep water to get up on to the reef, and the consequence was that two out of three were killed there and then. But one, a magnificent specimen of a man, with considerable strategic intelligence, had climbed up on to the reef nearly fifty yards away from the front attack, and now, single-handed, came rushing down on the enemy. It was impossible to distinguish one from the other in this fighting mass, but, however it happened, our warrior suddenly disappeared into deep water on the outer side of the reef and we saw him no more. And now two of the enemy lay apparently dead on the rocks; one survivor standing alone. To shoot him would have been as easy as hitting a haystack, but fair play and admiration of his pluck withheld a single barrel from being raised against him. He remained fearlessly looking at our men for a moment, his bronze-black body glistening with perspiration, his club resting on his shoulder, and no doubt he thought his last moment had come, with more than fifty rifles not a hundred yards off. Then he suddenly whisked round, plunged into the sea outside the reef, swam for a short distance, climbed it again, no doubt thinking he was out of range, and finally made a dash for the beach and the safety of the jungle. Some bluejackets went

off to the reef and picked up the clubs and bows fallen from the dead natives, and rolled their bodies into the sea.

The muster-roll was then called to go on board, but three were missing: a mate, Tupper, nephew of the melancholy poet of that name, and two blue-jackets. So a search was made, and there, by the side of the path leading through the dense jungle to the still blazing village, Tupper's body was found, stripped naked, with the head battered out of all recognition. It was clear that he had been slain hardly ten minutes before, and that the natives must have been dragging him off as our men returned, for he was quite warm, and a track was left showing where they had been drawing the body. As to the other two men, no trace of them was ever found, but we learnt afterwards that there had been great rejoicing amongst the savages, with an almost unequalled feast of white men's flesh.

Our friendlies had made one prisoner, the chief of the tribe. How such a renowned fighter could have fallen into their hands alive, we never knew, but suffice it to say he found himself, a few hours after, chained by the ankles to an iron bar between two guns on the main-deck of the *Iris*. I do not know if it was in our Skipper's mind to hang him at the yard-arm, but the belief that this would be the man's fate was very general on board, and I can scarcely doubt the savage himself contemplated no other fate. But there was: for we landed him a few days after on another of the Hebridean group, where the people were not friendly to his tribe; so probably death overtook him shortly in another form.

Meanwhile, on board our ship, we had in him an instance of how extraordinarily susceptible are some

men to the influence of music, even amongst the most savage. Our band was playing one night, and as the strains of music rose and fell, this grizzly, grey-headed old chief gradually drew his gaunt body from the deck on which he lay, wriggling his feet in the irons until he could lean over the gun which separated him from the musicians, where he remained apparently transfixed with wonder, his head rolling about, his eyes half-closed, whilst every now and then he would give a low grunt of approval. Then when the first tune was finished, he stretched his arms over the gun and tried to touch a fiddle that lay within his reach. This was handed to him and he examined it most carefully, inside and out, playing with the strings and rapping the wood, with a smile of childish delight on his face. All that evening he listened with the same rapt attention, as though a passionate love of harmony had suddenly dawned on his savage soul, seeming oblivious of the fate which a day or two might bring him.

But the charms of music had really done little to soothe his savage breast, for only an hour or two later he made a senseless and reckless attack on his sentry. Suddenly seizing a cutlass, which had foolishly been left within his reach, he aimed a desperate blow at this marine, who fortunately saw it in time and skipped back. I happened to be close by, and I can see the great savage now, lean, wiry, a man of fifty or sixty, with a small bullet head, grey hair, large rings in his ears and rows of shark's teeth round his neck; an expression of the utmost ferocity on his face, his teeth showing like a wild beast's, his eyes flashing, his chest heaving—the cutlass in his hand. No one could go near him, and for a moment it was proposed to shoot him then and there; but our gunner—the afore-mentioned Barter—seized a rammer from overhead, and with a sudden thrust threw the chief

on his back, when, in a moment, the sentry and some others flung themselves on him, wrenched away the cutlass, and left him lying with his forehead streaming with blood where the rammer had struck him. This was bandaged up, and he lay quiet until washing decks roused him out in the morning.

We conveyed our friendlies back to their part of the island, and though we did not trust them sufficiently to land and visit their village—as they wished us to do—still they endeavoured to do the honours of their country and brought off a large roll of something done up in fresh banana leaves. This, on being opened, turned out to be a roasted blackman's thigh, and they were quite as much astonished as hurt when we declined to accept the gift.

CHAPTER X

NEW CALEDONIA AND THE LOYALTY ISLANDS

Port of France, a deadly hole—Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand—Faith in his own theories—Threatened duel ends amicably—Loyalty islanders—Unceremonious exit from the frigate—The Palolo: its marvels—More massacres—Blood, rum, and missionaries—A glimpse of bush life—Ravensworth—*Une incomprise*—Shipwreck of the *Duncan Dunbar*—A gold-field—Tasmania—A sympathetic Bishop.

FROM the New Hebrides we went to Port of France, the French penal settlement in New Caledonia. If it was not quite as bad as Norfolk Island had been it was not far off, and yet many of these poor wretches were not criminals but simply political offenders whose plans had failed.

A more deadly and depressing hole than Port of France cannot well be imagined, with all the added horrors of cruelty and brutality. It is true there were few guards to prevent the convicts from escaping, for in reality the governing powers were only too pleased when a convict, or a few of them together, could escape, by seizing a boat and making their way to Australia: a matter of frequent occurrence. But the chief guards of the island, and of Port of France in particular, were the sharks, who were so numerous and so bold that they had been known to dash in amongst men bathing on the

beach, capture some unfortunate individual and disappear with him into deep water.

The French officers entertained us very well, giving us a banquet in a big marquee, but by bad luck there was an unpleasant incident after it. The Frenchmen accompanied us down to the boat, when one of us, quite unintentionally, said something that gave offence; whereupon one of the Frenchmen, over excited by wine, struck our man in the face, who simply picked him up in his arms and chucked him off the head of the pier into deep water, when the bowman of our cutter fished him out with a boat-hook. The Frenchmen were a good deal annoyed, more especially the man who had been in the water, who came out sputtering and spitting, and rushed to attack his enemy. But the more sensible of both sides intervened, and, with a formal challenge, given by the Frenchman and accepted by our man, the affair ended. Next day I accompanied this man ashore to settle things, but found the French officers quite disposed to view the matter in a sensible light. For neither party saw much fun in being cashiered, as the survivor doubtless would have been, had either of them been killed. So instead of fighting we sat down amicably, drank Bordeaux, and smoked the Havannah of peace.

A cousin of mine—on my mother's side—a French Marquis—was a convict in New Caledonia just then, but I did not come across him. His sister was, at the same time, wife of a Foreign Ambassador in London.

It was an evil day for our Antipodean Colonies when the British Government allowed France to lay hands on New Caledonia, which by right of discovery clearly belonged to England. It might have been one of the fairest possessions in the Empire, the biggest island in the South Pacific except New Zealand, and rather larger than Wales, with a very healthy climate and with

invaluable mineral deposits, gold, copper, cobalt, nickel, limestone; in fact every metal needed by man. In the interior are mountain ranges, upwards of six thousand feet high, watered by countless streams and clothed with fine forests. The native inhabitants are of distinct races in different parts of the island. They were always peacefully disposed towards white men before the blessings of civilisation overtook them, but now, with the exception, perhaps, of tribes on the Congo, who come in contact with the Belgians, it would be difficult to find any with a worse reputation. But, like the Congolese, the New Caledonian is rapidly vanishing, shot down wholesale, driven from his home by convict settlers, or kidnapped into slavery for Queensland sugar plantations, whilst—as all the world over—the vices of civilisation, its diseases, drunkenness, and immorality, kill them off by hundreds.

I saw some of the aboriginal race, and they struck me as very like the Australian black; flat noses almost flush with the eyes, frizzled hair and receding foreheads. But, in other parts, the men and women were of quite a fair-skinned type, well formed and rounded, and much more civilised in every way; living in comfortable huts; holding property in land and so forth. Their clothing is of the scantiest, but—as in Japan—they attach no sense of immodesty to nudity, which, like morals, is after all, much a matter of times and places.

But in New Caledonia the chief peril for peaceful inhabitants, native or European, is the *evadé*, the desperate convict who escapes to the almost impenetrable forests and there lives in pure savagery, so much so that it was then, and may be still, unsafe to venture alone in many parts of the country. At last, however, it became the custom for settlers to shoot these unfortunate wretches at sight, with the result of terrible retaliation; farms being

burnt, men flayed alive, old women and children butchered, and young women carried off into the forest, where all trace of them was lost.

Whilst we were in the Port of France, a trading schooner had picked up on the coast a white woman scarcely distinguishable from a savage, though speaking some unintelligible French jargon. She had been seized ten years before by an *evadé*, and had lived a frightful life. She was about ten or twelve when captured, but had now entirely forgotten who she was. As there was a great dearth of ladies in the Settlement, after being polished up a bit she found many admirers and married a French sergeant.

Port of France swarmed with sharks, and in this connection I may mention an example of a man putting his theories to a practical test. The celebrated Bishop Selwyn, of New Zealand, in entering the harbour in the *Southern Cross*—his missionary yacht—had touched a coral reef. It therefore became necessary to examine the state of the yacht's copper, but no one on board any ship in the harbour, including the *Iris* and *La Bayonnaise*, a French frigate, would venture into the water. So the Bishop, who held that if a man showed a bold front to a shark he would sheer off, went overboard himself, with a long sharp knife in his mouth for defence, and, diving under his vessel, ascertained the damage. He then came on board our ship and we arranged to careen the yacht sufficiently to enable him to nail on some copper sheets, which he did himself, again spending a long time in the water. For some curious reason not a single shark hove in sight all the time. The Roman Catholic chaplain ashore was so persuaded that the Bishop had been miraculously protected that he drew up a regular *procès verbal* and sent it to the Propaganda in Rome.

We next visited the Loyalty Islands, which lie about one

hundred miles east of New Caledonia, for them an unfortunate propinquity, for the French, with the idea, which seems general, of "rounding off frontiers," took possession of them, although England had partly occupied them. But, as usual, England took a back seat. There was much strife between the rival missionaries, Protestant and Roman, the French Commandant endeavouring to drive the former out of the island, and behaving altogether in a most outrageous manner, borne with the usual British pusillanimity, so that we came very near losing our Australian Colonies. For the Australians resented this disregard of their interests in earnest, until finally Downing Street was galvanised into some semblance of self-respect, and obtained protection for the Protestant mission.

The Loyalties are a curious group, some rising two or three hundred feet above the sea, others almost awash. They are very numerous: the natives of different islands of distinct types, yellow and black, and speaking different languages, although close to each other. This diversity of tongues amongst savages, whose requirements and habits are practically identical, is most puzzling. How can these differences have arisen? In Maré, the chief island, the natives are of the yellow-brown type, with round limbs and straight or slightly frizzly hair. They crowded on board our vessel, bringing off yams, taro and bananas, and were with difficulty expelled even when the ship was under way and standing out of the bay. One after the other their canoes had cast off, afraid of being towed under water as our speed increased; but still numbers of men and women remained on deck, apparently quite willing to go away with the vessel, and watching with wonder the great topsails bellying out in the wind, and the rattling of tacks and sheets as the courses came down into their places. We were already two or three miles out

of the bay before we had cleared the decks, which had been done by pitching the natives over the side into the water, many obstinately refusing to go by any other process. Of course they all swam like fish, and we watched their heads bobbing above the water until they reached the canoes, which had lain to to pick them up.

It was here I first saw a dried specimen of that inexplicable marvel of nature, the Palŏlo, a fish which may vary from an inch to a foot long, and about an eighth of an inch thick. It appears, in shallows over coral reefs, during the months of October and November, and then only with certain phases of the moon, disappearing again as suddenly as it came, until the following year. For some inscrutable reason these fish keep accurate Solar time for their arrival, but, as the librations of the moon—through certain errors of motion and other complex conditions—do not give this time accurately when spread over a long course of years, an instinct, infinitely beyond human understanding, has taught the Palŏlo to divide these lunations into two cycles extending over twenty-nine years. Thus, by a process of calculation sufficient to turn the brain of a Senior Wrangler, they keep "on time" —as an American would say—whereas if they followed the lunations pure and simple, in a century or two they would be months out of their reckoning, and would not appear in these particular phases.

But every year they come exactly at the right time, and all this is not mere scientific speculation, but absolute fact based on observation. It is almost equal to the very highest branches of astronomical observation, and yet in the case of these invertebrates—very low in the scale of life—apparently without any structural development higher than an alimentary duct, creatures who live but one year and appear but for one day and then vanish—we have objects gifted with what

amongst men would be genius. It is idle to dismiss the marvels of the Palŏlo as merely instinctive, according to the meaning we attach to the term. No theory —no science can explain why these creatures breed on a certain astronomically and mathematically calculated day, and only on that day out of the three hundred and sixty-five. Why?

The fact that for probably millions of years the fish we now see have inherited this knowledge is marvellous enough, but it sinks into insignificance with the puzzle as to how it began and what particular fish first calculated how to hit off the third quarter of a particular moon. He may have lived before the moon had separated itself from the earth, and was still a bulge on the earth's surface. Something in connection with this bulge, or something it contained, was possibly necessary to, or connected with, the life of this fish, for as a heavenly body alone our moon could not have interested him. Slowly this mathematical genius was able to transmit the knowledge to myriads on myriads of his descendants that their reproduction on a given day depended on certain astronomical facts, which were regulated by the position of the Earth at Aphelion and Perihelion, the Precession of the Equinox, the Inclination of the Ecliptic, and others too complicated to describe.

Their mode of propagation is curious. On this day, the only day they are ever seen, the male and female both break up in pieces, the ova being thus fertilised in the sea. This embryo sinks to the bottom, and for a whole year is never seen. Then suddenly, on the appointed day, it rises, a complete fish, lives for an hour, breaks up and leaves others to follow. Truly these things are staggering.

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It would be wearisome to describe the scores of islands in the Pacific which we visited during the next two or three years—New Caledonia, New Britain, the coasts of New Guinea, the Solomon and Louisiade Archipelagoes. Suffice it to say that we had one or two more expeditions to revenge the death of that eternal strife-breeder the missionary, the cause of more misery and bloodshed than any other class under heaven, but carrying out one behest of their Master, if no other; namely, to bring the sword and not peace. I forget the name of the particular apostle who, about this time, got himself eaten in Erromango, but I know that we despatched dozens of savages who were not concerned in the feast, to accompany him to the shades below, and left a legacy of hatred that has never died out of these islands.

First the missionary, bringing bloodshed: then the beach-comber—with rum, gin, and disease.

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On our return to Sydney, I got a fortnight's leave and went up country to Ravensworth, a station on the Hunter River, belonging to Captain Russell, father of the well-known General, Sir Baker of that ilk.

It was my first glimpse of a squatter's life, and it appeared to me fascinating beyond degree. But, alas! how entirely one's ideas can alter, according to the point of view. From thinking Ravensworth a most pleasant place when visiting it as the guest of Sir Baker's eldest brother, William—a most charming man—I came in after years to know there almost the greatest unhappiness I have ever endured, and lived to shake its dust off my feet with feelings of elation which no one but a released convict could realise.

I had a delightful time, this first visit, joining in all bush occupations: with many days spent in visiting

neighbouring though distant stations, where naturally we were made most welcome. Our nearest neighbours were the Glennies, Langs, and MacDougals, all typical of bush society at its best. But smaller stations were also within reach, where life was distinctly primitive, the earliest conditions of squatting still prevailing. At one of these the family consisted of father and mother and three daughters ranging in age from fifteen to twenty; the girls—having never been out of the bush—altogether unsophisticated. Their house was not less unconventional than themselves, the room I occupied—about eight feet by five—being separated from that of the three sisters by a partition of thin slabs of timber, whose widely-gaping joints had once been covered by strips of newspaper, which, however, time and the warping of the wood had rendered useless as far as obstructing a complete view of the interiors of these rooms was concerned. As both their beds and mine were against this practically invisible wall, I felt very much as I did in the cockpit of the frigate, with my hammock bumping against my neighbour's. For convenience' sake we all went to bed in the dark, but this did not prevent us keeping up much talk and chaff after we should have been asleep.

I went to stay two or three days with these people, and I was awakened one morning very early by thumping on the partition and being told to look sharp and get up as I was to go for a ride before breakfast with one of the girls. I lost no time in dressing, and the girl and I went down into the paddock, where she quickly caught two horses. After a brisk gallop which took us up a high hill we started a large kangaroo, which, bounding away over the loose stones at great speed, was soon out of sight. We then dismounted, tethered our horses, and sat down in the wiry grass, with stunted trees behind us. My companion was naturally clever, but as ignorant of every-

thing in the shape of books as a girl of Southsea beach, but she was very interested in anything I could tell her. She was very peculiar to look at—a broad, Slav or Bulgar type of face, with sullen-looking eyes that saw everything, mouth as firm as a rock; colour dusky red, and with extraordinary vitality. Her curious character revealed itself almost involuntarily, masterful, impatient, openly discontented with the monotony of life. I well recall what she told me of herself. She was, of course, *femme incomprise*, which, though often evidence only of mere morbid vanity, was, in her case, very genuine. No one understood her, no one had any sympathy in her passionate longing for a wider life; her thirst after knowledge, of she knew not what. Her mind was a mastless boat on a tossing sea of doubt, to sink or float according as to who should seize the helm. She had many perverted ideas of right and wrong, gathered doubtless from the few questionably desirable books she could find in her father's collection. I happened to see these books, lying about for his daughters to read or neglect as they pleased, mostly poisonous, such as "La Nouvelle Heloise" (in English), "Tom Jones," "Clarissa Harlowe," old Elizabethan plays (unabridged), with piles of erotic, trashy novels. She had never heard of Hans Andersen; of the "Vicar of Wakefield"; of Scott's novels; of the "Essays of Elia"; of "Pride and Prejudice"; of "Emma," or of any leading classic in English literature.

I hope I shall be pardoned for this sketch of a curious individuality, but to me the study of character has ever been of immense interest. Here in this out-of-the-way Australian home was a woman with an almost abnormal temperament, terribly awake; an imagination so real that its ideas were hardly any longer subjective; reckless courage and complete indifference to conse-

quences; body and soul unsatisfied. To this day I look back and wonder what became of her.

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My leave over I returned to my ship, still lying in Sydney Harbour, and was in time to see one of the most terrible of shipwrecks. A large passenger ship, the *Duncan Dunbar*, had been hurled, in the middle of the night, straight against the cliffs at the entrance, where in three minutes she was literally dashed to pieces and sank in deep water, every living soul perishing: with one solitary exception. I forget how many passengers there were, but perhaps three hundred or more, amongst them numbers of well-known Sydney people—fathers, mothers, sisters, children, all hurried into eternity with positively not five minutes' warning. The master had evidently mistaken a place called the Gap—a low part of the cliff near the Sydney Heads—for the entrance. But the recklessness of attempting to run through the narrow entrance in a heavy gale at night was unpardonable.

The news of the wreck reached us at dawn as our ship was in a bay just the other side of this wall of cliff, and we immediately sent men with ropes to see what could be done. But there was nothing to do, for the ill-fated vessel was hundreds of fathoms under water, and the bodies of the drowned were dashing up against the cliff, torn and mangled beyond recognition, whilst for several days boats were picking up bodies that had found their way into the Port. But in searching along the cliff our men saw a man lying on a narrow ledge below, and lowered a bluejacket with a rope, who with great difficulty—as it was still blowing a gale—succeeded in getting into this mere crack, finding there, alive and unhurt, the only survivor of the wreck. He had been flung up by an extra high sea and had been deposited there in safety.

He was a seaman, by name Thompson, and his marvellous rescue excited much interest in Sydney, where a handsome sum was collected to start him in life. I heard afterwards that he very ill requited all the trouble taken about him.

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About this time a new gold-field was reported as having been discovered in North Australia, at a place called Canoona beyond the FitzRoy River. Of course there was the ordinary "rush," but, the diggings proving a failure, there was soon a dangerous state of affairs amongst these always lawless, and now desperate, men, recruited, as usual, from the greatest rascals of all lands. For starvation stared them in the face, with no possible means of getting away from the place, as the first amongst them who had succeeded in reaching Keppel Bay—where they had disembarked—promptly seized on the small sailing ships lying there, deserted by their crews, and at once set sail, fearing the arrival of other famishing hordes, for whom the few provisions left in the ships would not be sufficient during the long voyage back to Brisbane or Sydney, a distance of two thousand five hundred miles. In the diggings horrible things were going on, men killing each other for a pound or two of biscuit: stores looted, whilst the police were powerless and compelled to remain bailed up in a laager of bullock wagons.

When news of this arrived in Sydney, the Governor requested our Skipper to go up to maintain order, for a number of sailing craft had already started for Keppel Bay, and it was important that they should have protection from over-crowding, as most of these rescue crafts were ill-found, ricketty island schooners, coasting brigs, and that class of vessel. Arrived in Keppel Bay we established something like martial law, packing the

diggers on board each craft in the numbers we thought she might carry without actually going down, trusting them to the protection of that Providence whose chief concern seems to be the preservation of the most worthless. For a more cut-throat set of rascals never assembled anywhere; amongst them escaped gaol-birds of every nationality under the sun. There were women, too, in Keppel Bay, many of whom had tramped on foot all the way from the diggings, their shoes completely worn out, their petticoats or dresses, as the case might be, in rags. They were bivouacked on the beach, apparently knit by adversity in the bonds of common sisterhood, for, though all were not, still the bulk of them were outcasts—lures of Sydney and Melbourne bar-saloons. Who can tell how much was forgiven them for their acts of pitying unselfishness? Surely they stood nearer the Gate of Mercy than the murdering, fighting, selfish male-brutes around them, who the world still called respectable, doing nothing for each other in their hour of need!

We did what little we could for these unfortunate women, bringing them shoes, ship's duck and serge, with soap and such like gear. Their gratitude was certainly worth having. They were all shipped off in one craft, a barque, and landed in Sydney, and I may mention that, many months after, a woman stopped me in the streets and told me she remembered me at Keppel Bay, had never forgotten all our kindness, and that she was all right again and had a billet as housekeeper to a Roman priest near Paramatta. I had some difficulty in recognising her, but she told me I had given her a pair of evening shoes and some ship's flannel. But ablution and absolution had done so much for her that I thought her master might have chosen a much worse handmaid than this rosy Irish girl.

But to return to Keppel Bay and the deserted goldfield.

I had the good luck to be invited by Sir Maurice O'Connell, the Deputy-Governor of North Australia (which, with Queensland, then formed part of New South Wales), to accompany him up to the diggings, together with two other officers of my ship. A more picturesque figure than this gallant and courteous Irishman it would be difficult to find. Remarkably handsome—of a Spanish type—a perfect figure, charming, cavalier manner, witty, and well read, a fine seat on a horse, an excellent swordsman and shot, he was of a school that seems to have passed away. We had an escort of two or three of the mounted police, amongst them one by name Randal, who had been successful in capturing some notorious bushranger single-handed, and—only a year or two after—lost his life in endeavouring to apprehend another.

As the easiest way to reach the Canoona gold-field was up the River FitzRoy—navigable for a certain distance—and then across the bush, we embarked in a small steam launch, brought up at the first rush by some enterprising individual, and now lying derelict. A queer old Scotchman, who was called Sandy, was engaged as engineer, though knowing no more about an engine than a mandarin. He had become landlord of the leading grog shop of Rockhampton; the late landlord's partner, a large-hearted lady from Poplar—inured to the ways of sailors and dockers—going with the business. We were told that her former partner had been knocked on the head by a thirsty digger whose pick he had refused to take in exchange for a drink—which is not surprising, seeing picks and all such tools lay derelict all over the place, whilst a bottle of beer was worth fifteen to twenty shillings, and of brandy about thirty. The ruffian had got off to a ship and escaped, but the landlady was so pestered with the attentions of other diggers who wished to come and

help her that she had been compelled to take on Sandy —a notorious fighting man—for self-protection. But he had now arranged with his pal to look after the business during his temporary absence with us as chief engineer.

It was late in the evening before we got under way and began steaming up the river, which was a broad, fine stream, but, higher up, difficult of navigation from sand banks and drifting wood. After a smoke, and many yarns, we lay down to sleep, but about midnight we were awakened by the boat bumping on to the bank, when, by the light of the moon, we saw old Sandy on the bank, his stoking shovel in one hand and his knife in the other, engaged in single combat with an alligator. He had seen the reptile lying on the mud as we passed, and sheering in had jumped ashore to attack it, and as he was between it and the water, with a steep bank behind, there was nothing left for the brute but to fight. But our appearance on the scene seemed to decide it to adopt different tactics, and, with a terrific swish of its tail, it flung Sandy back into the shallow water and then plunged out into the stream, when we saw no more of it. We fished Sandy out of the water, none the worse for the blow, though it seemed heavy enough to have felled an ox.

It was a typical night on an Australian river, the distant howl of dingoes, with the occasional plunge into the water of some river monster, as he slid off the bank terrified by the snorting and panting of our engine, adding to the weirdness of the scene. But romance had to give way to the fact that it was under the influence of gin that the worthy Sandy had been inspired to fight the alligator, and as he was rapidly becoming hopelessly drunk, I volunteered to steer, with Randal in the bows keeping a look out for snags, and sounding with a pole as we crept on. Sandy

was not, however, too drunk to do some stoking, and, with a last effort, tumbled about amongst the pieces of wood and threw all he could lay hold of on to the fire, having done which he banged to the door of the firehole, and lay down to sleep—soon snoring with the noise of a throttle valve. The rest of the party also settled down, and I continued to steer, until dawn appeared, and the sun shot up above the trees. By this time all hands were awake and began to look about for their boots and shoes, which most of them had pulled off before lying down. The police, sleeping forward, were successful in finding theirs, but all the other passengers—except Sir Maurice, who had kept on his long riding boots—hunted in vain. Not a boot or shoe was to be found, although they had been carefully piled up near the stoke hole to keep them dry from the heavy dew, which fell like rain. It began to be serious. Where, in Heaven's name, could they have got to? At last, amongst the ashes under the fire was discovered an interesting collection of iron heel pieces, boot nails, and a heel or two that had refused to burn. For Sandy, groping about for fuel, had seized all the lot and had burnt them. I had, fortunately, kept mine on, but the predicament for the others was extremely awkward, for several of our party had no others, our luggage being limited. So they had to go about in their socks until we reached the diggings, where they were fortunately able to replace them in a deserted store.

We were met some miles out of Canoona by more mounted police, having exchanged our steamer for horses, when navigation became no longer possible. A more hungry, murderous crowd of human beings can scarcely be imagined than we saw wandering about this Inferno. That they should be lean and hungry-eyed and clad in the most dilapidated garb, often nothing

but a tattered shirt and ragged trousers, one could expect, but their evil looks of mistrust and murderous intent were a sight not easily forgotten, and haunted me for weeks. Silent and starving, these sun-parched wrecks of humanity prowled about looking for food, like dogs in an Eastern city, hopelessly turning over empty cans for a stray ounce of meat, and peering into empty bottles, if, perchance, there might be a drop of liquor still in them. Shanties of every description and built of all kinds of material, with mounds of black-looking earth, around which some starving Chinaman might still be seen hunting for specks of the accursed metal, dotted the treeless plain. Overhead the tropical sun blazed down in unclouded power, the grass and the leaves of the low scrubby bushes cockling and withering in its fierce rays: the very sand almost too hot to lift in one's hand. Far away to the south a faint blue outline marked where the hills divided this country from Queensland, whilst a shimmering haze to the west spoke of the trackless wilderness of Central Australia.

The Governor's arrival created less stir than one would have expected, for these forlorn men were incapable of taking interest in anything but the procuring of food. A few gathered round our horses and asked what was going to be done for them, if drays of provisions were coming up, and what ships were in Keppel Bay. But they melted away when they heard that beyond that some sheep had been bought and were on the road, nothing was contemplated, and that all Sir Maurice had come to do was to make arrangements for shipping them back to Sydney. We saw men in twos and threes and some singly filing off down the barren and waterless track that led to the sea, faint and weary already at the outset of their desperate march, and it made one shudder to think that not ten miles off they would

come across the whitening bones of others who had gone before them, probably only that morning. For in a very few hours the huge red ants, who smell their prey for miles and come like a devastating horde, settle on a fallen man or beast often before the breath is out of the body, devouring every particle of flesh.

On a slightly rising ground stood the police laager, consisting of three good tents, a shanty built of packing-cases and tarpaulin, the whole surrounded by wagons and one or two light carts. We were glad to get into its shelter, for apart from the intense heat of the sun, the attitude of the diggers and others was anything but re-assuring. For small squads of armed and scowling men had already grouped themselves outside it, and the police thought it not unlikely they might try to rush the place. But as the few paltry ounces of gold that had been found had long before been escorted back to Rockhampton, there was nothing to gain by the attempt except securing a little food with the absolute certainty of some of them being shot.

We remained two days at Canoona, and then started back, going by road all the way. We heard that numbers of men and women, who had attempted that journey, had never reached Keppel Bay, having either died of hunger or wandered away beyond all trace of civilisation. There were a good many blacks about, and they were very hostile. We came across the body of a man whom we had met on our way up, tramping alone towards the sea. He was drunk when we met him, and had generously offered us a drink out of a bottle of gin he had with him. He had kept a bar-saloon, he told us, but it had been looted, he himself barely escaping with life. He said he was a Freemason, for we had a long talk with him, having halted near him for nearly an hour, and he wanted to initiate me in Masonic mysteries there and

then. He mentioned an inaugural ceremony, which Masons have since assured me never takes place, but I leave it to Masons to say if it is true, as I believe it to be, though for sheer childishness it is hard to beat. This ceremony consists in making the novice dance over crossed swords in his shirt, the shirt being only a concession to more modern ideas of decency and by no means *de rigueur*. Where the unfortunate man now lay showed us he could not have travelled five miles after we had left him. His gin bottle was empty and so hot from the sun's rays that it blistered the fingers of one of our party who incautiously picked it up. His body was swarming with red ants, his face already an indescribably horrid spectacle.

In due time we reached a station owned by people —who have, I believe, since become millionaires—where we put up, and were most hospitably entertained. One of their stockmen, on the evening of our arrival, was seized with a choking fit—some obstruction in the throat. A surgeon, who shall be nameless, ventured to perform the somewhat risky operation of tracheotomy, but severed the carotid artery instead, so that the man died.

On getting back to the ship we found that a great number of the small craft had been sent off, and we left again for the South.

After this we made visits to Melbourne and Tasmania. The chief impression left on my mind by Melbourne—beyond the magnificence of the public buildings—was the expense of living, which made it impossible for us midshipmen to even order a cup of chocolate in a café, as it cost two shillings, with sixpence for a sponge cake and a shilling tip for the waiter.

In Hobartown—now Hobart—we found ourselves in another social atmosphere, Arcadian in comparison with Melbourne or Sydney, people more resembling our

home belongings in ideas, and lacking the go-ahead Americanism of the other Colonies. I was fortunate in having a distant connection in Hobartown, the wife of Bishop Nixon of Tasmania, and these people bestowed great kindness on all the mids of the ship. They were a large family, but only two of them at home at that time: both girls. The Bishop himself was a charming man, artistic and cultivated, with little or no Episcopal austerity, with a merry twinkle in his eyes and a pleasant smile. His wife was, perhaps, most Bishop of the two, severely kind, but one whose bony hands gave us midshipmen the impression that she would lay them on us, without Litany or Suffrages, if she caught us up to any pranks with her daughters. She seemed thoroughly to mistrust boys, especially of the naval variety, and we were proportionally shocked at the narrowness of her views: for she told some of us one day that she had seen a midshipman kissing a girl in the conservatory at the Government House ball, and that unfortunately she could not recognise who they were, or she would certainly have reported it to the Captain. I quite agreed with her that it was scandalous that fellows should come ashore and behave like libertines, and I learnt afterwards that she told one of her daughters how pleased she was to find that I had been so well brought up at home, and had not deteriorated in the demoralising atmosphere of a man-of-war. We laughed over this for nearly a week, for we both knew who were the culprits.

The Bishop himself was very fond of astronomy, that is, of having a good telescope, and with it gazing at the moon and stars, with such vague and reverent ideas as the contemplation of their stupendous meaning conveyed to his mind. But, as is often the case, pursuit of one science leads to discovery in another, and his investigation of heavenly bodies led to some unexpected

results. He had just then had a telescope—quite out of the range of ordinary optical instruments—sent to him as a present from England, and his delight at receiving it was great. He lost no time in unpacking it; set it upon its tripod, and there being nothing astral to observe in broad daylight, turned his attention to things terrestrial. He adjusted it carefully until he might easily have seen a fly on a man's nose two miles away, and all being ready, began to sweep the landscape, when, into the field of his vision, came a patch of clearing in the bush, where trees seemed to form a pleasant shelter from the hot afternoon sun. An idyllic scene met his gaze; a midshipman seated peacefully on the grass, with his arm round his youngest daughter's waist. But, doubtless reminiscent of his own youth, and still further being a sympathetic man of the world, he neither flew into a rage nor smashed his glass, but simply turned it in some other direction—for his other daughter was also walking about with a naval man. But, when an hour or two later the unconscious couple he had seen in the glade strolled casually home, he took them out on to the verandah, turned the telescope on to the spot where they had spent such a happy afternoon, and then left them. Then they knew; for the girl's handkerchief was still lying there, where she had forgotten it. Many years after, at Stresa on Lago Maggiore, he told my wife this story, but added a detail I had never known, that it was by the merest accident his wife had not looked through the telescope too, having only a moment before been called away by some row with the cook. Had she done so it is difficult to say what might have happened.

CHAPTER XI

NEW ZEALAND

Fascination of New Zealand—Appreciation of the Maori—Shipwreck of his noble life—Parson, police, and prison—The Bay of Islands—War dances—Hokianga—Consumption and the white man's clothing—Bishop Selwyn's devotion to the native cause—The Waikato River—Interesting excursion and narrow escape—Native chivalry—Military unpreparedness and traditional muddle—Two ring stories.

NEW ZEALAND—that most fascinating of countries—was now to occupy a large part of my time and to bring new interest into my life. It is a wonderful country, and looms on the imagination out of all proportion to its size, for it is rather smaller than the United Kingdom, whereas Queensland—a mere geographical expression to many—is six times larger. Much of the scenery of New Zealand is magnificent, with forests of most impressive grandeur, where grow the Kauri and the tree-fern, that exquisitely graceful plant. Rivers wind through the forests with every charm of that kind of scenery, whilst natural marvels—such as geysers, hot springs, and volcanoes—abound in many parts. In the Southern Island there is country quite equal to Switzerland, with ranges only a few feet lower than the Alpine giants, surrounded by glaciers larger than any in Europe, with beautiful lakes, gorges, torrents, and cascades, and with coast scenery almost unequalled.

In this land, in harmony with their surroundings and penetrated by their influences, living subject to laws well suited to their mode of life, and corresponding to their stage of civilisation, dwelt some 400,000 people of one of the finest races of mankind, when discovered—in 1769—by the white man. Fearless, honest, and sober, their women almost invariably virtuous, it was difficult to see why Providence interfered with them, for beyond all doubt they were better off then than now. It is true they fought and also that they occasionally devoured each other, but they died with arms in their hands, and their cannibalism, besides being only ceremonial, was also, after all, a matter concerning no one else. The wonders of the heavens, sun, moon, and stars, light and dark, the wind in the forest, had given them that belief which is the universal basis of every other known to men. The Maori God was the Sun; and darkness the Evil Spirit.

Once an old Maori pagan, who spoke English fairly well—having been a long time in Auckland—told me that he himself hoped for something on which he could lay tangible hold in his heaven, where men would still do brave deeds, where they would hunt the moa and have their wives near them; with the mountains of New Zealand above them and the solid earth under their feet. To be for ever arm in arm with missionaries, and employ his time throwing crowns about did not appeal to him as a man—much less as a warrior. It might suit the Pakehah, but never a Maori.

As to the old Maori laws, they certainly protected his property and his home better than any he now enjoys. He preserved them both with his club, but now he employs a lawyer—who runs up bills and gives away his client as easily on the Waikato as in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Again, what struck my old pagan as an advantage

in his own belief was that, whereas his cost him nothing, the missionary religion cost his country enormous sums. However, I could not explain that, as I should have had to begin with the elementary history of the human race, back into the dimmest past, when shrewd men began to see that to plough souls is less fatiguing than to plough land, and that to draw bills on the Hereafter is a fairly safe business. I had a great respect for this tattooed, battle-scarred old chief, who sat surrounded by his totems — grotesque and gaudily-painted figures of roughly-carved wood, with their staring eyes and grinning mouths, ornamented with the teeth of a shark—himself clad in his long grass cloak, his jade-stone club by his side, seeming to listen for the voice of the Great Spirit as it walked through the forest behind him.

I have always thought it extremely doubtful if any warlike savage—after a certain age—could be got to comprehend religion in the abstract, with nothing concrete about it. And there is always the danger that during the process of indoctrination his mind may mix up the germs of his old faith with the new. Such a case certainly arose in New Zealand when that half-maniac, Te-Ua, preached his terrible creed, which went by the name of Hauhau, enjoining wholesale murder. I may be pardoned if I briefly give his history, for it is not only curious, but extremely instructive. Originally he was a mere wandering, epileptic vagabond, pretending to deal in occultism, and with some curious attraction for women about him. His proclivities in this respect often got him into trouble, and on a certain occasion he grossly insulted the wife of a chief, for which offence her husband tied him up with ropes, and threw him into a hole. But the Angel Gabriel came and released him. He was bound again, this time with chains, and again the Angel—or the chief's wife, who was suspected of

having acted like Potiphar's—came to his relief. The people therefore accepted Te-Ua as a man under Divine protection, for they mostly knew the story of St. Peter. Discovering this to be the view of the Maoris Te-Ua began to preach a distorted kind of semi-Jewish, semi-pagan Christianity, artfully utilising every word he could find in Scripture as to God's scheme of government by blood: following in this every reformer from Moses to Mahomet. He declared his country could only be regenerated by blood, and that it was the duty of every man to destroy his enemies—the Pakeha or whites in this case. It was the Children of Israel over again, and, in truth, with quite as much reason. The religion spread with extraordinary rapidity, the chief ceremony being to sing hymns and perform a solemn dance round a pole, called a Noo-i. These hymns were ancient airs revived, and the mere chanting of them aroused the people to frenzy. The Angel of the Wind—the meaning of the word Hauhau—was supposed to speak to them in these strains: voices of dead relatives, slain in the wars with the whites, to cry for vengeance. It was the most formidable danger that ever beset New Zealand. It swept away their older and more simple religion, and left them nothing but a revolting cross between ancient Paganism and Christianity.

The Maori had a high order of intellect and an extraordinary perception of the mental attitude of others, which enabled him to turn things to his own advantage. Though fierce and passionate, he generally had his temper in control and was not often gross or sottish. No doubt, though, the Maori of to-day is entirely different, as how—poor devil—could he escape from being, with an entirely unsuitable civilisation thrust on him? But the Maori I knew still owned his own land, obeyed his chief, followed the immemorial customs of his ancestors, and

was a terror to us in arms. He was infinitely superior to any of the lower classes in Europe, and I would far rather have married a Maori girl and settled down on the Waikato River in company with these pagans than have taken for my helpmate the sister of a Christian hooligan and have lived in a street, under the shadow of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in Lambeth.

* * * * *

My first experience of Native New Zealand, as distinguished from Colonial, was an expedition with the Governor, Sir Thomas Gore Browne—a distant connection of mine by marriage—through a wild part of the Northern Island lying between the Bay of Islands, and Hokianga on the West Coast. The great Maori War was then plainly brewing, the natives thinking they were being dealt treacherously with as to their lands and ancient rights, an opinion shared by the disinterested amongst the whites.

The Bay of Islands—a splendid country—was inhabited by the most savage of the Maoris, amongst whom the condition of unrest was very manifest. They greeted us with sullen looks; and, indeed, to witness the Haka or war dance—in which some thousand or fifteen hundred of them joined—their frantic gesticulations and scarcely-concealed hatred of us was rather a mixed joy, and well calculated to try the nerves of any one, knowing that it would only require the least spark to convert seeming play into sanguinary earnest. It was a tremendous spectacle, these masses of entirely naked savages, their eyeballs starting from their heads, their teeth gnashing, sweat pouring from their bodies, the rhythmic stamp of their feet, which seemed to shake the ground, their huge merés—the native club—and their hani—or spear—whirling in the air, whilst above the roar of their hoarse, guttural grunts could be heard the shrill, fiendish screams

of the Tohangas—the priests—urging them on to still more violent exhibition of fury.

After a day or two of Corroborries (called in Maori Koren), more war dancing and races between the huge war canoes—the most exciting aquatic exhibition I know—we started on our long ride across the island. The road lay for a great part of the way through a primeval forest of trees of gigantic size with undergrowth that had never been disturbed. The gloom in parts was almost oppressive, the air thick and enervating with the smell of damp mosses and rotting timber. Beyond a few of the great New Zealand pigeons, as big as a pheasant, there was little or no bird life, and only once did we see any signs of ground game, and that not indigenous, namely, a herd of wild pigs, descendants of some that had been landed as long ago as Captain Cook's day, and now as practically wild as the boar in the Ardennes. Our cavalcade was a fairly large one, some eight or ten whites and perhaps a hundred Maoris, amongst them Maori women, wives of the chiefs, riding their horses astride. Many of these people had hardly ever seen a white man, much less a white woman, and Lady Browne excited considerable interest amongst them. We reached Hokianga in due time, visiting the splendid falls of that river, the water leaping over great rocks at the head of the fall with a roar that could be heard for miles. The chief settlers here were missionaries of various cults, Romans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and so forth; all most honourable men, with whom it was an unwritten code never to blaze away at a Maori whom another missionary had landed. But the temptation must have been great, as naturally such a man represented the easiest prize, his theological leanings being always in the direction where most rum and blankets were to be had.

Most of the Maoris in this district, especially those of higher rank, were tattooed all over the head with curious and intricate concentric patterns; the women with only a few marks on the chin. This tattooing rendered their heads of great value when they were captured by their enemies, and, indeed, long after found a ready trade with white speculators, who bought them for European museums. It was quite possible for a white trader to point out a particular slave and ask for him to be tattooed, and then buy his head. Slaves were men captured in battle.

The old Maori dress was here almost universal, though rapidly disappearing farther south. It was extremely graceful and becoming, consisting mainly of cloaks of dyed flax—with very artistic designs—and of dogskin rugs, wrapped round them like a toga. In the immediate vicinity of the Missions the natives, however, had begun to adopt European garments, the women rendered hideous, and often indecent, by some draggled abomination in the form of a skirt, with perhaps a pea-jacket above it, and the men in untidy, ragged trousers. As they themselves disliked these things and only wore them to please the missionary or because they thought it conferred distinction on them, they universally threw them off when they got into their own wharés, with the result that the seeds of consumption—that fell disease which has more than decimated their race—were sown broadcast.

The Governor's business at Hokianga was a repetition of what had taken place in the Bay of Islands, namely, interviews with chiefs, war dances, and much manifestation of apparent loyalty. But with all this it was unpleasant to feel that one was walking over a volcano, and it was a relief to see the masts and yards of the *Iris* as we once more debouched from the forest on our return.

We at once sailed for Auckland, then the capital of New Zealand—though since supplanted by Wellington—when for months and months this harbour became our headquarters, owing, I suppose, to the turbulent condition of the natives.

In no place did my shipmates and myself make more kind or genial friends than in Auckland, where the society was quite unlike that of Australia—far simpler and far less ostentatious. Bishop Selwyn's house was always open to us all—especially us youngsters.

He was a man of most fascinating but dominating personality, and though he accomplished a work of unequalled magnitude and importance as an evangelist, not only in New Zealand but throughout Polynesia, still I always think he was a great Admiral or General thrown away. He was a born leader of men, and in the Roman Empire he might have been a Marcus Aurelius, acclaimed Imperator by the Army, and have been borne on their shields to don the purple at the Capitol. As it was, his incomparable energy and power of organisation fizzled out in starting missions. The Maoris adored him, and he held them in the palm of his strong hands. He was remarkably handsome and well made, except that his legs were too short. He had rather a brusque yet charming manner, whilst the highest virtues of man, including unselfishness carried to self-abnegation, seemed to live in him. I have never seen or known any man like him. There is no shade of doubt that by his power of will and the influence he exercised over the Maoris he saved the entire white population from massacre at a critical moment. He was a giant amongst the official pigmies that were then directing affairs in New Zealand, and, naturally, they hated him, and tried to fling dirt on his splendid achievements. It is true his policy and theirs were diametrically opposed, but in the hour of

need, alone and unaccompanied, he rode out of Auckland late at night to meet the infuriated Maori chiefs, who were assembled a day's ride from the town, threatening to overwhelm the white settlers—as they could easily have done. Carrying his life in his hand the Bishop, in bold but quiet tone, addressed the assembled warriors, goaded to fury by injustice and treachery; with a supreme contempt for the white man and his soldiers. It was an anxious hour, but the Bishop carried his point, and the horde of savages, with that great warrior, Tamihana, the King Maker, at their head, vanished once more into their forests, still brooding over their wrongs, it is true, and, as it turned out, only waiting their opportunity to be avenged.

* * * * *

The Waikato.

To guard against captious criticism, I wish to say that I do not pretend to chronological accuracy as to the war and other events in New Zealand, as everything I narrate is from memory; and the circumstances themselves are clearer than their sequence.

Shortly before the war broke out, I had an opportunity of visiting the Waikato District, starting out from Auckland with two of my messmates—Medley and Heneage—and having with us John Gorst—afterwards a Commissioner in the Waikato District, under Sir George Grey, subsequently the brain of the Fourth Party and one of the cleverest men in the House of Commons.

We rode for a certain distance with a packhorse carrying our light traps, and then marched on foot through the wonderful forest to a small bush inn kept by a man called Selby, about a mile from the River Waikato. Here we fell in with Bishop Patteson, the celebrated Missionary Bishop of Melanesia, who was

killed by the natives in the islands a few years later. He —with a number of his island black boys—was bound for a Church Festival at Kohanga, the Missionary Settlement of Archdeacon Maunsell. The Bishop greeted me most kindly—for he had been a great friend of my brother Harry at Eton—and struck me, as he did every one else, as a charming man, with a sweet and genial disposition. He suggested that our parties should join, as the country was much disturbed, and we gladly assented, paddling down the river to Kohanga in his canoes. Here we all put up at the Maunsells, and stayed there over Sunday, Gorst going away next day to his District, and we three of the *Iris* starting up the river again, sometimes in canoes and sometimes taking horse to shorten the road where the river curved. The scenery of the Waikato is exceedingly fine, with forest, mountain, and occasional broad sweeps of cleared land; and at that time was well populated with Maoris. We were received with a show of cordiality in some places, but distinctly cold looks in others, for the war spirit was smouldering, and, indeed, we were thought foolhardy in risking ourselves amongst these reputedly treacherous natives. We passed many nights in their wharés, which were often of considerable size; built of logs, with grotesque figures carved on posts standing in front or at the side. Our first halt was at Ngaruawahia, where the River Waipa—which waters a splendid country towards the East—falls into the Waikato. Here we put up with a chief to whom Bishop Selwyn had given us a letter—a fine old man, over seventy years of age, with a head that would have fetched a fortune for the beauty of its tattooing. We had been warned, however, that it is a grave offence to compliment a man on a personal adornment of so much commercial value, and that it was especially indiscreet to allude to a man's head even remotely. We spent two

long days with this hospitable old man, whose family consisted of three daughters and one son—a grand specimen of mankind—who had brought home a young wife from the Taranaki District. She was hardly less remarkable in physique than her husband, with much of that aristocratic languor of manner which so often distinguishes the high-born Maori. Not long after both he and she were bayonetted in a rifle pit, in an attack made on a Pah by Captain Cracroft and the *Niger's* Naval Brigade; for his wife, like many other Maori women, had followed her husband to the war.

After leaving Ngaruawahia we found ourselves in the Maori King's country—a potent warrior whose power England, as usual, had underestimated—and had reached a remote part of the Waikato when we were overtaken by a messenger despatched post-haste by the Governor, at the instigation of the Bishop, to recall us. For with perfect loyalty the Maori King had sent a secret message to the Bishop that he could no longer guarantee the safety of the missionaries spread along the river, nor that of any white settlers. There was no alternative for us but to abandon our journey to the Great Lake, and forego our visit to the volcanic marvels of that strange land. Then an important chief came from the King and urged us not to delay an hour in starting on our homeward journey, assuring us that heavy fighting had already taken place at Taranaki: that all the Waikato tribes were on the point of breaking out, and that, by this time, there was not a white man between us and the Auckland Road.

We decided to move at once and in less than an hour, although night was coming on, we were under way, and with considerable difficulty reached the river by daylight where we embarked in canoes, passing through many villages where the natives stood scowling and angry on

the banks. It was not entirely pleasant, for we quite expected a shot at any moment. Nevertheless, knowing that it would be fatal to betray alarm or mistrust, we had to sit quietly in the canoe as if it were an everyday occurrence to go boating under the muzzles of double-barrelled guns, loaded with slug and bits of broken bottle; and an angry, irresponsible savage with his finger on the trigger. The whole country was swarming with natives, who danced and yelled on the river bank like fiends, and seeming to have reverted to a purely savage state in their excited condition, the European blankets of the men, and the petticoats and bodices of the women having been discarded for the native mat. It was as though we had stepped back to the days when Cook first saw the Maori, and was certainly a sight I shall never forget.

At last we arrived at a point on the river where our native guide became extremely nervous, evidently mistrusting the natives, and advised that we should anchor our canoe out in the stream when night came on, until he could ascertain the state of feeling amongst the inhabitants, adding that he had kinsmen somewhere in this neighbourhood, and might be able to find out how the land lay. So we dropped a big stone with a line attached, out in mid-stream, the river here being of considerable width and flowing smoothly though swiftly. It became completely dark: the fires on the banks opposite gradually dying out, whilst the distant voices ceased, and even the dogs left off yelping. Then the moon came out, but until it rose high, we lay under the shadow of a forest-clad hill and were apparently out of sight. But towards eleven o'clock our guide's sharp ears or keen eyesight detected some object in the water, and nudging me, as I lay nearest him, pointed out something dark swimming straight towards us. Soon we

saw that it was a human head, but as there was but one we waited without concern, and in a minute or two a tangled mass of dark hair, streaming out on the water behind the swimmer, showed us it was a woman. She stopped a few yards off the boat and called out softly, using our guide's name. He instantly answered: and, turning to me, said, "She is my cousin." A brief colloquy in Maori passed between them, and then she came alongside and held on to the gunwale, where her gleaming shoulders looked like burnished silver in the moonlight, whilst her hair, floating away down stream in thick sea-weed-like masses, suggested a Rhine maiden. Round her neck was a shark's tooth necklace and a broad white bracelet above her elbow. Attached to her waist by a grass rope was a large fish, already cooked, but none the worse for its immersion in the water, and right glad were we to get it: for we had eaten next to nothing for eighteen hours and were ravenously hungry. Then it appeared that—for two reasons—the woman must pass the night in the canoe: first, that she could not land near her village for fear of getting into trouble for befriending the Pakeha; and, secondly, that if she landed in the forest —and so got back to her wharé—she would be caught by the evil spirit, by whom it was haunted. So it was decided we must take her on board, but it was not an easy matter to do so, for the canoe was very crank, and the woman's weight on one side would have capsized us all in the river. We made her swim to the stern, and rousing up Heneage and Medley told them to shift into the bows whilst we helped her to clamber in. The stowage of this very substantial young woman was rather a matter of difficulty in our already cramped space; she, however, coiled up under the rug we threw over her and seemed to sleep the sleep of an infant. She told her cousin that it was quite by chance that she had heard

that he was on the river with the party of white men, who were known to be hurrying back to Auckland, and that she had come off to warn him of the great danger we were in. According to this man's account she was a very remarkable person, and knew that part of New Zealand better than any man living, as she frequently was sent all through the Waikato and Waipa Districts to deliver secret messages to the chiefs about their arrangements for the war. He said she was one of the fastest runners in New Zealand, of marvellous endurance, and could beat any horse on a long journey in that wild country, by crossing dangerous swamps and swimming rivers. She had been telling him of the things that were being done hundreds of miles away on the West Coast, at Taranaki, all of which turned out to be quite accurate, proving the amazing rapidity with which news spread amongst the Maoris, from end to end of the country. Nor were their organisation and the discipline with which reinforcements were pushed to the front, their perfect system of commissariat—carried out by the women as bearers—less astonishing, leaving our poor bunglers nowhere.

But to return to ourselves. The rest of the night passed undisturbed, and with the first streak of dawn our Maori girl bestirred herself, and after taking a mouthful of cold tea, which remained in a bottle after our last night's supper, and with a cordial and friendly leave-taking she slipped noiselessly into the water, disappearing rapidly in the stream, to land a mile or two lower down in the forest. We were not long in following in the canoe, and, weighing our stone, drifted away before daylight had spread over the country, landing that afternoon at the spot where, on our way up, we had left our horses. Fortunately for us the ægis of the Maori King was still, more or less, over us, and the animals had

neither been stolen nor impounded for transport: one more instance of the chivalrous instincts of the old-time Maori. For they knew that we had gone up the river in perfect good faith and not as spies, and that in so doing we had placed our lives in their keeping. I do not remember having heard of a single act of personal or private treachery on the part of the Maoris during the whole of the New Zealand War, and it was certainly owing to their noble qualities that we owed our return to safety.

As we had still some hours of light, and as the moon would make it easy to travel, our guide recommended us to push on, the Maoris giving us potatoes and honey to eat before starting, and filling our pockets with peaches, which grow wild in profusion in parts of New Zealand. Our road now lay through partly cultivated land, but intersected by broad belts of primæval forest—many miles in extent—through which we had ridden on our way up, following tracks plainly discernible by daylight and equally so—to our guide—by night.

But in many places these paths skirted the forest to strike where the trees were thinner, or to avoid swamps, and now, having rather lagged behind the others, I found myself at a point where the forest road branched away from the open. Here I turned into the wood, the tracks of horses leading me to suppose my companions had gone that way. I pushed on as quickly as I could to overtake the party, but it was bad going, and though my horse was a very good one, I neither came up with them nor heard a sound ahead. Already the great tree-tops were fading into gloom, and before long their giant stems and the great tree-ferns were one indistinguishable mass: the foliage being so dense that no ray of moonlight could penetrate. So I left it to my horse; feeling the road getting soft under his feet, and then, all of a sudden, he

pulled up dead short, sinking to his knees in a thick bog. I tried to pull him back, but he only floundered and got deeper, nearly up to the girths, for I felt the mud under my feet. I thought that having ridden so fast I must have come up with the others, or at least be near them, so I coo-eed with all the approved screech I could command. I might as well have whispered, for no sound broke the solemn stillness. But as my horse seemed settling down quietly in the mud, I got off his back, for I had heard many a dismal tale of the terrors of these awful New Zealand bogs, fathoms of black mire, in which men, horses, and cattle are frequently ingulfed. My horse, too, evidently understood his peril for he began to plunge about violently, and in doing so wrenched the bridle out of my hand. How it all happened I do not know. At one moment I felt I was on my knees in this strong tenacious slime, then I thought the horse was on the top of me. Again we floundered, the animal falling on his side. He seemed to be trying to work backwards and I did the same. At last we both most mercifully got back on to the firm ground, where I had still sufficient presence of mind left to grab hold of the reins and hold on to them. For the terrified animal would certainly have made off and left me alone in the forest. I found a large fallen tree near me, and on this I sat, my horse, who had made several attempts to get away, at last standing shivering by my side. After a short time I got off my log, felt about cautiously, and found firmer ground. I then buckled the reins of my horse into my belt, and propping my back against the tree soon began to doze, the horse motionless by my side. It was a weird night, the gloom and silence of the forest almost overpowering. But though I frequently awoke, by fits and starts, I slept a fair amount, and once, on opening my eyes, saw a broad silver streak some distance off amongst the trees and thought it might be the river.

But I would not venture to approach it in the dark, for it would have been no advantage if I had, also I thought it might only be surface water lying over some dangerous quagmire, and in this I was right, as I saw by daylight. But at last, to my great relief, on opening my eyes for the hundredth time, I saw the underparts of the highest of the pines growing pink and gold, whilst the exquisitely melodious note of the Too-i—the Parson Bird—which heralds the dawn in that land, told me day was at hand. As soon as I could see at all, hungry, stiff, wet, and shivering like a dog in a damp sack, I got on my horse and looked about for the track over which I had come. But not a sign of footpath was to be seen, for I had evidently wandered completely away from it and had no more idea where I was than a blind man in a strange city. I cast about for some time, riding across the line I thought would strike the track, but I found nothing, so giving it up as a bad job, I determined to push through the forest in the direction of the general trend of the river, which I knew was about north-west; and this, with my nautical instinct as to how the sun must bear, I had no difficulty in doing. I was fortunately riding one of the best horses in the Waikato District, and leaving him to pick his way, but keeping his head in the line I wished to follow, I rode on for hours and hours. At last, to my relief, I saw a clearing in the forest, large trees lying prostrate, and I knew I must be coming to some place where men had been. And true enough, in about twenty minutes, the clearing became open country, and then, to my still greater relief, I saw what I knew was a mission-house. I rode on gleefully, but not a sound reached my ears, not even the bark of a dog and my heart fell. It was deserted, the missionaries having all fled. However, I took comfort, for naturally there was a road which must lead somewhere, and I saw by its direction

that it was the right one for me. So I rode on, taking the greatest care to keep to the right track, always heading north-west, for scores of paths led away in different directions. I rode all day and I thought I should never fetch anywhere, but, just as night began to settle in, I saw the gleam of the river, and, what interested me more, heard the barking of native dogs, and knew a village must be at hand. I was too tired and hungry to think twice of the risk, so I rode straight down into it, and made for the biggest wharé. I was at once surrounded by men, women, children, and dogs, but though their greeting was not cordial it was not hostile. I only knew a very few words of Maori, but they quickly understood two things, first that I belonged to a party of whites who had passed down river—for I had struck it far below where they had left their horses and had embarked in a canoe—and secondly that I was famishing with hunger. In a short time they produced some grilled fish and potatoes, the latter cooked to perfection, native fashion. Then one of them took possession of my horse—which was a well-known animal, and of course found its legitimate owner in the course of time—for I was now to go by canoe. It was the possession of this horse that identified me with the travellers gone ahead, and this averted any suspicion of my being a spy.

One can only speak of men as one finds them. I have always had the greatest respect for these enemies into whose hands I had fallen. I say enemies, because, at that very moment, British troops were being hurried up from Auckland for the great war. There was nothing to have prevented them killing me, or at least holding me prisoner until they heard their King's pleasure. I should have been sorry to find myself in the same predicament with a pious Boer community. Furthermore, there was not the least attempt to find out if I had any money, or, perhaps,

papers about me. They did not even take my revolver, a prize of the utmost value to New Zealanders at any time, but more particularly at this moment, with fighting close before them. As night came on they offered me a bed of dried ferns in a hut, but when I crawled in through the low door I was nearly suffocated with the smoke of the green wood, burnt to keep off flies and mosquitoes. So I passed the night outside, covered over with a grass-mat, and slept as soundly as in my hammock. Very early next morning they put me into a canoe and started me off, paddled by an ancient, grey-haired man, with a face literally covered with tattoo, and by a young girl, apparently his granddaughter. I did not overtake my companions for three days, old Charon leaving the navigation to the girl and myself, paddling and drifting all day, and bivouacking by night round a fire in the forest. I enjoyed the trip amazingly; indeed, for me, it came to an end too soon, for we all got on extremely well together, and by the time I said goodbye to them we had become the greatest friends. At last we reached Ashwell's mission, situated near the junction of the Waipa and Waikato. It had not suffered the fate of all other missions in the district, of being burnt down. Furthermore, I believe that Mr. Ashwell himself remained there unmolested throughout the whole war, for he was popular with the natives, and thus safe amongst them when every other missionary, male and female, had had to abandon their posts.

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When, finally, we reached Auckland we learnt what risk we had gone through; for whilst we had been buried in the wilds of the Upper Waikato, an army of Maori fighting men had been collected, and lay between us and Auckland. Bishop Selwyn had been most anxious about our safety after receiving the King's message, and had

ridden out as far as was still possible to endeavour to find us, whilst the Governor and our Skipper had greatly regretted allowing us to go. The only people unconcerned were our messmates, who took it for granted that we should turn up all right. When we met the Bishop he said—

"Well, you are wonders! you seem to have had more adventures in these three weeks than I have had in all my numberless journeys on the Waikato."

Gorst had got back before us, and indeed, with the exception of Ashwell, the missionary, not a single white man was left in the country. It is interesting to remember that we had met the old and venerable Maori King, Potatau, a wonderful old man, holding a kind of mystic semi-religious sway over these great islands and all their warlike races. But like the Mikados of Japan he had an Alter Ego, who generally rose to power by personal qualities. At this time the office was held by Tamihana, who I have mentioned before, vulgarly called William Thomson by the white man. He was a great warrior and statesman. Amongst others we had met on that trip was Malutaere (Methusalah), son of Potatau, next King, and father of the present King.

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In connection with the Waikato, a circumstance, which seems to border on the marvellous, took place. Knowing the people intimately I believe the facts are true. Just before my journey on the river a friend of mine, called McDonald, was also travelling in this district. He stopped one night in a native village by the river-side. The natives caught a fish for him—the Karwai, I think it is called—with the usual native hook, a glittering piece of mother-of-pearl. On cutting open the fish, a turquoise ring was found inside it. My friend gave the native some trifle for it, put it on his little finger, and there it

remained for nearly a year, when, returning to Auckland, he offered it to his sister, wife of a Captain of Artillery. It was a ring she had lost about a year before the time of her brother having bought it from the natives. It had slipped off her finger when bathing in the Waikato River, at a place fifty miles away from where the fish had been caught. Her initials, which her brother had not observed, were engraved inside. And *apropos* of this ring, the digression may be pardoned me if I tell an equally curious story which happened in my own family. My eldest brother, Harry—A.D.C. to Sir James Outram during the Indian Mutiny—volunteered to lead the assault on Delhi. On the top of the breach a round-shot shattered his leg: he was carried down by an old Etonian friend—who he had not met since leaving school—and placed in his tent where his leg was amputated. In the night a great thunderstorm swept over the camp, during which his tent was blown over and the shock killed him. His native servant looted the tent and deserted to the mutineers, carrying off my brother's watch, rings, and money. More than fifteen years after that, my brother-in-law, Colonel Lloyd Evans, who was Deputy-Commissioner of Oude, was travelling in some remote part of Cashmere and was pestered by a native in a bazaar to buy a ring. He refused even to look at it, but the man was so insistent that at last he took it in his hand and was struck with astonishment at first seeing the Gambier crest, and then my brother's initials "C.H.F.R.G." inside. I have that ring to this day.

CHAPTER XII

WAR—AND AN IDYL

Taranaki War—Naval Brigade—Beauchamp Seymour (Lord Alcester)—Hotham—Province of Canterbury—*Rencontre* with the missing link—Muscular Bishops—An earthquake—An idyllic life—A Maori Chief's daughter—A change of Skipper—A warrior bantam—A phantom cat—Homeward bound—Pay-off—Cram for examination—Back to Cheltenham—Some of my relatives—My cousin, Gambier Parry—*Sicut omnes.*

THE great Maori War now broke out in earnest, and it was only an extraordinary piece of good luck that, instead of annihilating Auckland—as they could so easily have done—the natives attacked the Taranaki District, the first brunt of the fighting falling on the gallant old 65th Regiment, which, having been stationed in that country for many years, consisted of well-seasoned men, more or less accustomed to bush life. To these were soon added a Naval Brigade, *Niger*, *Cordelia*, *Pelorus*, and the Colonial warship *Victoria*, generously placed at the disposal of the New Zealand Government by the Colony of Victoria. This force was gradually supplemented by reinforcements from Sydney — the 14th Regiment and the 40th. Some artillery and engineers were already in New Zealand. But still this army, unprepared, badly equipped, indifferently organised, with leaders who, one after the other, lost their heads, figuratively, was a mere handful as

against thousands of the bravest, fiercest, and most cunning of enemies that British arms had ever fought. In a short time we, of the *Iris*, were formed into an additional Brigade, 150 strong, with a 12-pounder howitzer (myself in command of this gun), and we were marched across the neck of land which divides Auckland from the West Coast, where we were bundled on board the *Cordelia*—a small corvette, commanded by Captain Harcourt Vernon—and were landed anyhow in the roaring surf at Taranaki. Here we quickly made an entrenched camp on a promontory in an advanced position, from which the Maori attack was to be expected, the burnt and deserted town of New Plymouth at our rear, the forest and wilderness before us, and towering above all the exquisitely-shaped Mount Egmont, a perfectly symmetrical cone, 9,000 feet high, with an even ring of snow half-way down its sides. I think few things mark off the old Navy from the new, so much as the advance made in service ashore in Naval Brigades. Nowadays a Naval Brigade is better disciplined and better organised in the strict military sense, has more cohesion, is better provisioned, and is better equipped than brigades of soldiers. In my day, when we landed at Taranaki, we simply transferred the decks of our frigate to *terra firma*. It is true we dug a deep trench and threw up an embankment; but we did it on our own untutored design, and we believed, and I think so still, it was a great improvement on the earthworks of the Royal Engineers for the Army in that ours kept out the enemy and theirs did not. For we never had an ugly rush and men tomahawked in our tents, which, however, did happen to the soldiers. But this was also possibly due to the fact that our camp and ship life differed very little. We had no officer of the guard, sloping about in the mess-tent or guard-room, waiting to be called if anything happened, with sentries,

whose ideas of keeping a look-out had been learnt on duty at Marlborough House or the Bank of England. In the Naval Camp we simply kept ordinary sea-watch, with bluejackets on the look-out, accustomed to have their weather-eye open, within easy reach of each other; a lieutenant walking about night and day with precisely the same regularity as on the quarter-deck of his ship, with so many midshipmen of the watch, and half of the men sitting about with their rifles ready to spring out when called with the same alacrity as if they had to shorten sail in a squall. Boatswain's mates went about with their whistles and shouted orders in their stentorian voices; "bells" rang regularly every hour and half-hour, sea-fashion, lights went out, and "rounds" took place with the ordinary routine to which we were all accustomed. No one thought of going out of the camp without leave. When we were not landing provisions in the surf, and hauling them up the shore, we were drilling in camp with rifles or cutlasses, and exercising the men at taking down or rigging up tents.

We were soon quite comfortable, after a Mark Tapley order, as the weather was cold and rainy and the camp a sea of mud, and we ourselves generally wet through. But we made the best of it, our diversion being the capture and riding of horses that had been left behind by the settlers when they had to clear out. Amongst these settlers had been an uncle of mine, an ex-major of the 9th Lancers, who had been in all the great Indian fights —Chillian-wallah, Ferozeshah, Sobran, Moodkee, and so forth. He and many other fighting men—foreseeing the Maori War—had early volunteered to serve the Queen in any capacity, but the wisdom, or jealousy, of our Generals declined their services. But two months afterwards these wiseacres were scouring every corner of the Colonies for any kind of ragamuffin who could carry a musket. Of

fighting there was soon plenty, with surprises and ambuscades, where the tomahawk, fastened to the end of a long stick, over-reached the bayonet, and where several thousand Maoris would suddenly appear, or disappear, like mist on a mountain: their wonderful women, their commissariat. After a time Beauchamp Seymour—Lord Alcester, later on—took command of our Brigade, as brave a man as ever trod shoe leather, and regular warfare on some intelligent plan began, instead of the isolated, incoherent system previously at work. And bravest amongst the brave of the junior officers was Charlie Hotham, then a midshipman, and now an Admiral of the Fleet. But it is invidious to select names where so many did well.

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The first burst of war over, and troops having arrived from Sydney and others from India, the *Iris* Naval Brigade returned to our ship, leaving some of the men from other vessels still ashore.

We again had a long spell in Auckland, with nothing exciting as regards myself, though incidents of some moment occurred to many of my brother officers, no less than three lieutenants, one marine officer, and the paymaster getting married, three of the number into one family. My ship contributed a fair average of husbands to the Colonies, for the parson and three other lieutenants had already got married in Sydney.

We visited many bays and anchorages on the coast of New Zealand, where the Maori still lived with his family on his own land without benefit of law. Now these sites are occupied by flourishing towns, with police, prisons, pothouses, and parsons, and all the other embellishments of civilisation, including the last farce of all, municipal government. At Port Lyttleton—the harbour for Canterbury—strolling one day into a ramshackle bar-saloon, with a billiard-room attached, built chiefly of old packing-cases

and illuminated by two or three evil-smelling oil-lamps, I saw perched up on one end of the table, swinging a pair of short, distorted legs and sucking the top of a billiard cue, what I at first took to be an enormous gorilla in trousers and shirt sleeves. Save this horrible apparition, the room had no other occupant, and I prepared to back out of it, with that instinctive fear of being strangled associated with this kind of monster. But whatever the thing was it nimbly landed itself on its inturned feet, and, addressing me in perfectly good English, asked if I wished to play. I looked at it for a moment. Only once before in my life had I ever seen so hideous a countenance. Suddenly a gloomy evening in the Fives' Courts at Cheltenham College flashed before my eyes, and I recognised "Monkey ——" of my school-days. I did not tell him I knew him, for the position he was in was not pleasant, and he did not recognise me, but I had confirmation of his identity with the tormentor of my boyhood by hearing him summoned by his well-remembered name to the saloon to "chuck" out some disturber of the peace, which he did with extreme ease. Evidently the phenomenal strength of arm and back which had made him a terror at Cheltenham had not been impaired, and, what was equally evident, he had found the one occupation in life for which alone he was suited.

The Province of Canterbury was a settlement originally founded by ecclesiastics, with the praiseworthy idea that it should be a new Palestine of high religious endeavour under an Anglican dispensation. How far it realised their expectations it is difficult to say, though they must have ceased to expect much even before the Colony was two years old. The road from Port Lyttleton to the Plains of Canterbury lay over a most fatiguing mountain path, which, zig-zagging up an angle of forty-five degrees, was considered a marvel of engineering enterprise in those

pioneer days. To reach the top people were in the habit of holding on to a tow rope hung over the hind-quarters of a mule, whilst to go down on the other side, which was still more abrupt—and was even more fatiguing—necessitated frequent sitting down. The view from the ridge was grand, the sea rising up like the rim of a vast blue bason on two-thirds of the perimeter, a great rolling plain completing the circle of the horizon, over which, in the far distance, lay the snow-clad peaks of the New Zealand Alps.

A general feature of New Zealand Society in those days, and more especially in Canterbury, was the muscular Bishop; but one grew tired of learning how this one pulled in the Oxford Eight, or that one "held the record" (though that hateful expression was not then invented) for high jumping, or a third for boxing, and so on. Even their wives were marvels, not to say abnormal, for it was quite expected of them to sit a buckjumper and to have from ten to twenty children between whiles; whilst one lady, beginning somewhat late, beat them all by having her first child at fifty-two.

On our way North again we visited Wellington, then a very small and unimportant place, with a beautiful land-locked harbour. Whilst there we had a severe earthquake, the rumour spreading that the entrance to the harbour was blocked. But, alas! it proved unfounded, to the infinite disappointment of many of us who hoped that the Ship would never get out, and that we should lie there comfortably until another vessel came from England to relieve us. On shore a good deal of damage was done. The earth had opened in one place, and had swallowed up some cattle, but closed again so quickly that it jammed a cow between its folds, leaving half the poor beast sticking up above the ground. I did not see it myself, but was told it by men who said they had. It is rather an in-

teresting illustration of the Koran, Dathan, and Abiram affair, though I do not remember any mention of half-measures with those unlucky sinners.

In a small bay on the East Coast of New Zealand, not far from Auckland, a curiously idyllic life was being led. Here lived a white man, ex-captain of a whaler, who had built himself a house after the Maori pattern—a large roof resting on four solid trees, divided into two or three rooms inside—and had gathered round him a wealth of goats, pigs, ducks, and fowls. He was a man of about forty, striking in appearance and active as a gladiator. His weather-beaten face, grey eyes, strong jaw, and crisp, curly hair, showed his self-reliant nature. When I went up to his house he was mending the sails of his whale-boat, and standing behind him was his wife, a Maori girl of about two-and-twenty. She was the daughter of a chief of one of the East Coast tribes near Hawkes's Bay, and like chiefs' daughters everywhere, bore unmistakable signs of good breeding, with shapely hands and gentle voice. As a type of Maori womanhood at its best I will describe her. She was considerably over the average height of woman, somewhere, I should say, about five feet seven, as she stood in her bare feet. Her figure was as straight as a dart, her beautifully poised head surrounded by a nimbus of short, wavy brown hair falling loose on her somewhat square shoulders. Her complexion was one uniform, pale colour like ivory faintly tinted with Vandyke brown. Her eyebrows, almost meeting, made a straight line across her low forehead and seemed to mix with the brown waves on her temples. Her eyes, dark hazel, had a wide look in them with the steady gaze of a child. Her nose was straight, but with large nostrils which dilated with every passing emotion. Her mouth was broad and lips well formed, but she rarely smiled. Her chin was particularly strong with a broad split in it, and

adding firmness to a singularly strong face. She was dressed in one single garment—in form like a travelling-rug—made of some rough native cloth, dyed orange and red, with hundreds of tags of red worsted for a fringe, and with diagonal bands of black cloth sewn across it. It was worn thrown across one shoulder, passing under one arm, which it left bare, reaching below the knee on the longer side, but displaying a good deal of limb on the other. Its statuesque grace was a mystery, for Phidias would not have altered a single fold; from the whale's-tooth fibia which fastened it on her shoulder to the fringe dangling over her ankles. She was a woman who might have made or marred an Empire; and yet Destiny had given her to a whaling captain; to cook his food and feed his ducks in a remote bay of the remotest portion of the globe. In connection with these humble labours I saw here a curious instance of how quickly animals and birds will adapt themselves to food for which they were never designed. She fed these flocks of ducks on oysters, which grew in masses on the rocks below high-water mark, and it was a picturesque sight to watch. At a low whistle her whole flock would come waddling out of the long grass and from amongst the trees fringeing the shore and hurry after her down to the sea-side. With an accurate tap from a long-handled hammer she would knock open the oysters, which the ducks, scuffling after her, greedily gobbled up, pushing each other into deep pools, out of which they scrambled as best they could. I never saw fatter birds. The produce of this small farm went to Auckland in coasting schooners, and the return cargo would be generally gunpowder, arms, and tobacco, which the whaling skipper sold at a great profit to the natives. He became fairly well off, but, alas! the report of his success spread, and other Settlers came and dumped themselves down in this sweet spot, when all its idyllic

charm vanished, and with it, no doubt, the peace and content of the whaler and his Maori wife.

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Most lives—even the most prosaic—move in cycles in which fresh events and new ideas grow in the place of the old. Such a cycle was now at hand in mine, for I was to pass, almost at a bound, from boy to man.

Our commission in Australia had come to an end, our Skipper had left us, and had gone home by mail, and Captain Harcourt Vernon, of the *Cordelia*, reigned in his stead. He brought happiness with him, for in less than three days peace pervaded the ship, every one looking and feeling freer, though discipline was not relaxed. Even the cat-of-nine-tail slept undisturbed for the rest of the commission, lying snug in her red-baize bag in the boatswain's store-room; the rattans with which the ship's boys hands had been battered black and blue, grew stiff for want of exercise, whilst hungry midshipmen no longer clung to the cross-trees for hours in all weathers, or were robbed of their hard-earned night's sleep because some one else was in a beastly temper. But our commission was nearly at an end. A few alterations took place amongst the officers, some exchanging into other ships and one or two leaving the Service, amongst them Deane, who married, settled down in Canterbury, and made a fortune.

Then, after a thorough refit aloft and after many sad *adieux* in Auckland, we finally sailed on our long voyage home, nigh on 16,000 miles, round Cape Horn.

As a record of old days it may interest the dismasted modern sailor to hear that the first thing done on getting to sea was to strike below our upper-deck guns, to bend our best suit of sails and reeve new running rigging, precautions for our stormy passage on the great circle to the Horn, skirting the vast ice barrier of the Antarctic regions.

Not fifty per cent., all told, of those who had left the shores of England in that small frigate were returning to them again on board her. Death, marriage, disaster, and promotion had disposed of the officers, and the cat accounted certainly for two-thirds of the bluejackets. But I cannot omit to mention one most important life which had weathered it all, a gallant, little bantam cock, by name Billy, a desperate and well-nigh unconquered fighter. It was mere chance that brought this winged warrior on board the *Iris* at Chatham, intended by the gun-room Steward to grace a midshipman's feast, but reserved by Destiny to leave his mark on two hemispheres. In Europe, America, Africa and Australia, and many Ocean islands wherever and whenever fresh hens and their attendant lords embarked on board the frigate, his shrill clarion rang through the decks, as he marched up and down, peering in between the bars of the coops to discover a feathered male thing that had temerity enough to breathe in the same air as himself. Not half the size of anything that he was pitted against, yet none could resist the fury of his onslaught, so that most birds fled at once or remained to die. He lived a life of entire freedom, roaming the decks at his own will, roosting in the boom-boats in fine weather or perching on a gun-tackle near the galley on the main-deck, if it were bad. His most intimate friend and inseparable companion was Lee, the boatswain's mate afore-mentioned, and I have often seen this queer little bird sitting on the hammock-rail in the ship's waist as the man marched up and down on watch, when, if it was blowing hard and the sea coming over the netting, Lee would lift the hammock cover and put Master Billy inside, where he would remain perfectly content until Lee was relieved at eight bells. When Lee went ashore he almost always took Billy with him, indeed the bird would often remain on shore weeks at a

time, on leave, visiting farms, where his reputation for valour and his personal beauty made him welcome to many a comely foreign or Colonial hen. But he always came back when the anchor was weighed and the top-sails again hoisted. Before he left the Colonies and islands he had a large number of relations both by marriage and by blood. Revisiting some of the islands of the Pacific and bays of New Zealand we were frequently shown his descendants; Bishop Selwyn called him a "born sailor," and a funny, snuffy, old German professor, who collected beetles, christened him Augustus Der Stark. But the tide of his victories remained no more unchecked than those of Cæsar or Hannibal, for he at last suffered defeat and even came near losing his life. On leaving Auckland a huge barn-door cock embarked for passage with our sea stock of fowls. Billy saw him at once, and as usual, strutted before the hen-coop crowing his loudest challenge. The bird behind the bars grew furious, and of course a fight was at once arranged. But the heavy, well-bred New Zealander soon out-matched our hero, bearing him down by sheer weight and leaving him apparently dead on the deck. But Lee picked him up, limp and shorn of all his head feathers and his comb gone, bathed him with hot water and gave him a spoonful or two of rum, which revived him, whilst other bluejackets nursed him night and day by the galley-fire. He eventually recovered, and when the ship paid off at Chatham, departed, in splendid plumage, sitting on Lee's shoulder. But with that sense of fair play, which so pre-eminently distinguishes sailormen in all fighting matters, the life of "Maori," as the New Zealander had been christened, was spared, and he, too, reached England, retiring in company with a marine to Chatham Barracks, where, no doubt, he oft recounted the story of the battle of Cape Horn, to an admiring group of British hens.

I have been shipmates with ghosts in one or two ships, but we had none that I know of in the *Iris*, except that of a cat; the evidence in support of whose spectral apparition seems better than that of most such phenomena. This fearsome animal, when in the flesh, belonged to the master of the hold, a functionary who spends a more or less lonely life buried in the bowels of the vessel, overhauling casks and provisions; storage and re-storage his one pre-occupation. Naturally rats are his deadly enemies and cats a necessity of his existence. Our master of the hold, an ancient mariner with a back bent double with ages of groping in the wings of ships, brought on board with him a long, slim black cat tied up in a blue bag, who at once went down into the hold as into familiar quarters, only occasionally emerging at night into the light of between-decks, if one could call light the semi-obscurity of a few tallow-dips in horn lanterns. Often and often have I looked down into the hold and seen this weird animal following its devious course amongst the casks in pursuit of the wily rat; or, perchance, sitting by the side of the ancient mariner, chewing pork rind. Then came a time when his place knew him no more, when he no longer answered to the melodious call of his master's voice as the latter crawled into the remotest recesses of his domain crying, "Guts! Guts!" the missing creature's name. Not a trace of him could be found, nor yet when, in Auckland, some time after, the hold was partially cleared. Then, one night, weeks after this, a bluejacket seated by the cat-head on the look-out, suddenly saw Guts sitting near him on the hammock-netting. He was so certain of this that he reached out his hand to stroke the animal, but to his dismay, instead of the creature merely skipping down and going away, for he was not a sociable cat, he simply vanished into thin air. Needless to say no one believed the man's story, for even in men-of-war some

persons may be mistaken, but a short time after Guts was seen again, and then again, in all manner of places, until the crew began to have a superstitious belief that some one had thrown him overboard to spite old Bung —the familiar cognomen of all captains of holds—who was not a popular character, and that, in consequence, disaster must overtake the ship. I do not think there were ten men in the *Iris* who did not believe in this wraith. But after two years from the time when he was first missing his crumbling skeleton was found underneath some casks of pork which had not been disturbed since we had hoisted them in in Sydney at a corresponding time. It will be asked why no bad smell led to the finding of the body. The answer is that rats had devoured every scrap of him, except the bones, and that, probably, within a few hours of finding him dead.

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I quitted New Zealand and Australia with a heavy heart. I do not see how any right-feeling lad of nineteen could have felt otherwise. For I had left behind me numbers of boon companions and friends in every port we had visited. Also of my girl friends there were souvenirs in scores in the till of my chest: dead flowers, ribbons, ball programmes, single gloves—spotted with something salt that had taken the colour out of them—and small paper packets with names and dates. What sad yet pleasant memories they evoked, each with its own ghost fragrance! But at last the sight of them became unbearable, their chiding looks staring me in the face whenever I lifted the lid of this midshipman's holy of holies, or haunting me as I paced the deck in my night-watch: when I would fancy I heard voices coming to me on the wings of the gale: the sound in my ears of music in a lighted ball-room, or the chirp of a Cicada in some scented garden. Then I would think of the new life

before me, whilst the certainty that no word from any of the gentle friends who had given me these little keepsakes would ever come to me from across those thousands of miles of ocean made my heart sick.

At last, one night, a heroic resolve came to me. Throughout the four long hours of the first-watch these memories had been crowding on me, conjured up with extra reality by the strains of a favourite waltz being played that evening by the band. At midnight I went below, opened my chest and lit the candle, made all ghost-gifts up into a packet in a small lace handkerchief, weighting the whole with buckshot. Then I went on deck again and aft to the taffrail, and, as a big wave came crashing up astern, all in the inky darkness I committed these relics to its keeping. And as the frigate rolled on, clearing herself of the foam, I knew that no mortal hand could touch them again as long as this world lasts.

A night or two following on these obsequies we came near losing our ship and all our lives. It was my middle-watch, when the look-out suddenly roared out, "Iceberg right ahead, sir!" There was not a moment to lose for it was pitch-dark, with occasional blinding storms of hail and snow. Though blowing hard, as we were running before the wind we were carrying a good deal of sail which made it dangerous to come to rapidly. However, indecision meant total loss of the ship and all hands, and as there was no time to shorten sail I ordered the helm to be put down and took my chance of the mast going over the side. Up she came in the wind, every yard buckling like a fishing-rod; but by this time I had turned the hands up, and in a minute or two Vernon and the First Lieutenant were on deck and my responsibility over. We had an extraordinary escape, for a vast iceberg, probably two or

three miles long, lay stretched right across our course, and as we crawled away to windward, which nothing but such a perfect sailer as the *Iris* could have accomplished, we could hear the deafening roar of the breakers hurling themselves against the cliff of ice, and could see the shimmer of the spray in that curious white light which hangs above ice even on the darkest night.

But our troubles with the bergs were not over for we soon encountered others, and finally found ourselves in a veritable archipelago of ice islands. It seemed impossible at one time to extricate ourselves and it was not until daylight, when we saw an open channel to the southward, that any of us breathed freely.

In a gale of wind we rounded the Horn, standing up in the mist like a grim phantom. Beyond it, eastward, we looked across the whole stretch of the sea world, unbroken water from the South Pole to the North, the Atlantic, with all its vast diversity of climates, continents, and lands.

Then, with a glimpse of the lonely, fog-bound Falkland Islands, one fine morning, after many weeks' sailing, we hear the boom of the morning gun of St. Helena, now, no longer, an utmost outpost of our Empire, and, as the day draws on, catch sight of its steep cliffs and high-peaked mountains rising sheer out of the ocean. Nearer, and we see British ships, rolling at their anchors in the open roadstead, amongst them a bit of old-world history, a sight rarely or never seen now, namely, a British man-of-war guarding a slave-ship captured on the high seas. It was a curious sight, the bulwarks of the slaver a mass of black heads, men, women, and children, emaciated and half-starved, but laughing and gesticulating, being once more able to move their limbs freely, released from the fœtid atmosphere of the lower deck of the slaver, where they had lain chained together for weeks in filth and misery. There were also many other

craft lying off St. Helena: a large sailing passenger ship bound for Sydney, a pearling schooner for Torres Straits, an East Indiaman with troops for India, officers and their wives crowding the poop, the "greenhorns" grinning over the bulwarks, their first, and, in many cases, their last voyage, for probably a third of them would never see England again, sickening and dying, in a very few months, in Shiny Land.

I went up to Longwood and saw Napoleon's house and grave, and was powerfully impressed by his death-mask, a plaster-cast taken immediately after death. Whether it was association of ideas, or some potent influence of the very form of his features, I know not; but certain I am I have never looked on its like.

After two or three days spent in refitting aloft we sailed for England, the ordinary events of our lives following on each other with the same regularity, and a few deaths, sad and pathetic, almost in sight of the land where fathers and mothers, wives and sweethearts, have awaited them for four long years.

Then at last comes a night when we are all craning over the bulwarks to catch sight of the Lizard Light; and when we do see it, scarcely able to realise that it stands on a British rock. And as dawn comes on, and the land rises out of the mist hanging over the moist counties of Devon and Cornwall, it seems still more difficult to realise that English homesteads, with farm-hands already at the plough, milkmaids in the byres, English cocks and hens scratching and running back to catch English worms, are there.

With a strong south-wester after her, and every stitch of canvas it was safe to carry, the *Iris* staggered gaily up Channel, one familiar headland after another showing up until, at midnight, on the 24th of July, 1861, we dropped our anchor at Spithead. But by six in the morn-

ing we were again under way, finally reaching Chatham and paying off on the 3rd of August.

Meanwhile my father, with my penultimate brother, Alfred, afterwards in the 4th Hussars, had come to Chatham to meet the ship, and well can I remember the mixed feelings with which I saw these two coming along the dock-side, my father greyer and more bent, but with his light step and jaunty air unimpaired, Alfred, a tall lad of six feet, whom I had left a child. I call to mind, too, how, as my father came over the side, I felt instinctively that the old order had passed away, that in some strange way we were no longer the father and son who had parted five years before, and who would never know each other again. Alfred, too, was a stranger, recalling nothing to me of the sweet, chubby, little boy I remembered him, or of any member of our family. All seemed awkward and stiff, with the eyes of my messmates and brother officers on us, men with whom I was more in touch than with these two of my own flesh and blood.

We roamed about the decks in a condition of unfamiliar restraint, and went down into the berth, where I can distinctly recall the feeling I had that its strong smell of cockroaches and bilge-water, its dim light, and the rough appearance of most of my messmates—extra shabby after so many months at sea—must have jarred on the rather hyper-sensitive instincts of my polished old father, who always bore about him the very essence of a man of quality—a bearing Alfred also had largely inherited. I felt they were thinking that I had fallen in my degree. But in this I was quite mistaken; for their innate perception only showed them the better side of this simple, unpretentious life of duty and necessity.

We went ashore and dined at the old inn, by the pier at Chatham, sacred to the memory of Pickwick and his companions, and, but for a fat, old waiter—who had come

to believe that he had really seen these immortals in the flesh—regaling us with pot-house legends made the time pass, we should have been dull indeed. Amongst other anecdotes this venerable old Ganymede told us was how once a woman had hidden herself in a cupboard which he showed us in the room, to overhear what went on at a Masonic meeting, but that being discovered, by her dog scenting her out, had been hauled out and there and then made a Mason with all due Masonic rites.

As to myself, I was preternaturally silent and stupid, though I had innumerable things to tell, and still more to hear. In reality I knew so little of what was going on, or had gone on at home all these years, that I felt out of it. Names of places and people cropped up in their talk of whom I knew nothing, and every moment it was "Oh! I forgot; of course you don't remember"—this, that, or the other. But what I did learn was that our home was breaking up, that a new migration was in contemplation, and that once more the nomad condition in which we had always lived was to be renewed—as, indeed, it was, for they never settled again anywhere for any length of time.

The ship having paid off, after two or three days' leave at home I went off straight to Portsmouth to pass for Lieutenant, determined to get through all the examinations whilst what I had been cramming up on my way home was still in that terrible sieve, my memory. For the new Navy, then in its infancy, had been born during our long absence in the Pacific; new and unheard-of guns had been invented, new drills, new signals, and, above all, to pass in "Steam" was now compulsory. So with a resolution which astonished me then, and has continued to do so ever since, I worked night and day, determined to get through. For, literally, with the exception of seamanship, which had become my second nature, and

to which I gave no thought, everything I had to cram into my head was new. Suffice it to say I succeeded far better than I expected, getting first-class in Seamanship, first in the College (Mathematics, Navigation, and so forth), and a very good second in Gunnery. Unfortunately, during my exam. on board the *Excellent* (Gunnery), I broke down from overwork, fainting whilst ramming home a shot in an old 32-lb. muzzle-loader. But being caught by the heels by the man next to me, as I tumbled out of the port, I was saved from drowning. I recovered rapidly enough, but I felt weak and dull during the next two days, and was more than surprised to find I had passed at all in Gunnery, and greatly elated when I found I had done so well.

Thus ends my midshipman's life, for I was now a full-blown Sub-Lieutenant, as it had pleased their Lordships to designate the quondam mate, and with an intense sense of relief I turned my face towards home.

For six or seven months I was now kicking my heels about on half-pay, to wit five shillings a day; and spent my time chiefly in Dieppe, to which refuge our family had meanwhile migrated. None of us regretted leaving Cheltenham, the atmosphere of the place was essentially common-place, and the Promenade, where daily one met the same people, smelt of curry-powder, for every one was "Indian." Our own relations and chief friends were unspeakably dull, a maternal uncle, shot through the knee in action, and always speaking of himself as a "poor old beast of a wounded soldier," who had come down from a smart command of Horse Artillery to cooking peas and vegetables for himself in a *bain marie*, and keeping household accounts to the thousandth part of a farthing, whilst his wife's highest aspirations were to array her portly person in the lightest-coloured and tightest-fitting of bodices, the skirt with broad flounces.

distended over the largest crinoline in Europe, or that my uncle's pension could command, with a broad lace collar fastened to what was technically her waist by a huge white cornelian brooch with a spray of forget-me-nots on it in turquoise, and thus attired to sail down the aforesaid Promenade, as far as Furber's, the jewellers, beyond which it was the unwritten law of fashionable Cheltenham for no lady to penetrate into the town. Here she would tack and come up again, passing and repassing whole fleets of other dames, rigged up like herself, ten or fifteen times in the same afternoon. Not that Cheltenham was a bad place, from a matrimonial point of view, for it was the happy hunting-ground of hundreds of young men from India, with whom it was still a custom to get married on their pay. They came to Cheltenham for wives as naturally as a man goes to a restaurant for his dinner, and I am bound to say an uncommonly pleasant *ménu* of pretty girls was provided, suitable for every kind of palate.

About ten miles away we had a cousin, Gambier-Parry, of Highnam Court, a charming, gifted man, at whose house might be met all that was cultured and intellectual in England. He always asked my father and the rest of us to stay at his place when he had the aforesaid uncle and aunt and other Cheltenham people there, to whom he had to show attention. It was tactful and nice of him, as of course they were exactly the people we most wished to meet, and with whom we, and my father especially, had most ideas in common.

CHAPTER XIII

FRANCE, EGYPT AND SYRIA

Dieppe—Its delightful raffish Society—Escape from deadly Cheltenham—A queer old house—A byegone type of Roman ecclesiastic—Did Columbus discover America?—Brief *resumé* of contra-argument—H.M.S. *Marlborough*—I get to Egypt—Vivid impressions—Danvers and the Sphinx—H.M.S. *Malacca* and Gerard Napier—Many trips—Tight place in Adăna—Crossing the River Gihun—A night in a Turcoman camp—Antioch—Its byegone splendour—Legend of the Holy Lance—Countless millions of migrating wild duck.

AT Dieppe, on the Quai Henri IV., my father had taken a queer old house—built in the latter part of the sixteenth century—with brick floors in most of the rooms and beams overhead that would have safely carried a gun-deck. A frowsy little café, which reeked of stale fish and sea-boots, occupied the ground-floor, and was known as "La Vigne," for a large vine sprang out of the narrow pavement and clambered all over the front of the house. Into this café, at all hours of the day and night, in search of absinthe, clumped big-booted, loutish French fishermen, using fearful language, but fortunately only understood by themselves; with *douanniers*; carpenters; men who dug gravel; English sailors out of colliers and the Newhaven steamboats; and all the nondescript riff-raff of

a French seaport. The back part of the premises behind the *porte cochère* was occupied by a wine merchant, who also made cider, and from the cellars proceeded the never-ending ratt, tatt, tatt, rumble, rumble, rumble, of a cooper. But at night no human being would set foot in this damp and gloomy region, for it was universally believed to be haunted by some terrible spectre, as, indeed, was the whole house: so that my father got our rooms at a very low rent. But, in spite of these drawbacks, this quaint, rambling, old house and its surroundings were much more congenial to us all than Ashley Lodge, for, without exception, we all hated Cheltenham. At Dieppe all was different—the few people we knew we liked—much as we had those of old Boulogne days, and much the same class—amongst them an easy-going, old swell, a sequestrated rector, who preached in drawling accents, lolling over his pulpit, in lavender kid gloves many sizes too large for him. The place itself, too, had much interest about it; the long piers and the ever-changing sea an unfailing source of diversion; whilst under our windows the busy scene of fleets of fishing-boats, the fighting and wrangling of the semi-drunken, old fish-fags who handled the glittering fish, the crowd of sea-sick tourists and travellers disembarking out of the steamers—an endless amusement. Then the country around abounded with interest, history and romance at every turn: ancient *manoirs*, churches of great architectural beauty, everywhere reminiscences of the time when all this land was but part of England's kingdom.

My father and I—between whom a genial and loving intimacy had grown up, strangely in contrast with my boyish feelings—roamed all over the country and read up its history, becoming acquainted with a priest of the old school of Catholics, the Abbé Malet, Rector of Martin Église, an accomplished scholar, author of "Le Calendrier

Normand" and other historical works, a man of the world, a courtier, one who might have been a Cardinal Mazarin had opportunity offered. As it was, siding with the Royalists, fate had buried him in this remote Norman village, but possibly infinitely better off than had he climbed to wear the purple. It was the Abbé Malet who first put me on the track of the history of a celebrated Dieppe captain, one Cousin, who incontrovertibly sailed up the Orinoco or the Amazon two years before Columbus "discovered" America. Amongst Cousin's crew was a Spaniard, called Vincent Pinzon, who, for misconduct, was tried by court-martial on Cousin's return to France, and expelled the country. He went straight to Huelva, in Spain, where his brothers were small shipowners, his visit exactly coinciding with that of Columbus to the Convent of La Rabida, near Huelva. It is too long a story to tell here. Moreover, I have told it in the *Fortnightly Review*, and, with the exception of a mistake of my own in chronology, has never been contradicted by any one who has given himself the trouble to examine my facts. Briefly, however, this same Vincent Pinzon, who two years before was with Cousin in the rivers above-mentioned, accompanied Columbus in one of his own brother's ships, the remarkable fact being that Columbus had refused a great ship offered him by Ferdinand and Isabella, in order to take the wretched little caravel belonging to Pinzon's brothers. Did Pinzon tell Columbus of his cruise with Cousin, or did he not? It is quite true that Columbus, in the garbled and mutilated document which passes for his journal, does not say that he heard of this cruise, but is it likely he would? But it is quite beyond dispute that he had on board with him a man who had seen the great continent across the Atlantic, and I, for one, decline to believe that there was no connection between this circumstance and the selection by Columbus

of the miserable tubs belonging to this man's brothers. This, however, is a mere outline of the evidence.

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Early in the following year I was appointed as Sub-Lieutenant for disposal to the *Marlborough*, Flag-ship in the Mediterranean. This ship was then the acme of Naval splendour, the largest and most powerful fighting machine in existence, perfect in drill and discipline, and one of the "smartest" ships that ever floated, insomuch that her cleanliness and order struck wonder even into our minds, accustomed as we were to a high degree of excellence in all things pertaining to a man-of-war. From the truck to the kelson she was the same—this magnificent three-decker—her sides shining in the sun like a mirror, every one of her one hundred and thirty guns a looking-glass, every particle of brass like polished gold, her decks like snow, her crew as clean, powerful, well-set-up a body of men (one thousand four hundred in all, if I remember aright) as ever served their country. Even to this day, amongst us old hands, the *Marlborough's* commission is cited as the apogee of Naval discipline and good order, and certainly, though I am far from being a *laudator temporis acti*, I confess I have never seen anything like it since. I was a very short time in the *Marlborough*, being transferred to an ancient vessel, still, I believe, performing the duty of receiving-ship in Malta—the *Hibernia*—and from her to a vessel lying in Alexandria—the *Doris*—where I joined her, thus obtaining my first sight of a land that had always fascinated me when, as a boy, I had stumbled through Herodotus, wondering if he could be the liar my master at Cheltenham took such pains to make us believe him to have been.

I had three days in Cairo, still in its untouched Orientalism, Shepherd's Hotel—now noisy and crowded with Yankees and Germans—then a delightful, rambling

caravanserai frequented by travellers for India, who started on their desert journey for Suez from its doors. The whole city was to me one unbroken delight—from the gorgeously dressed grooms running before the Pashas' carriages, the veiled women, their dark eyes peering above the yashmak, the motley crowd of Orientals from every corner of Islam—the colour and bustle of the Bazaar, the camels, stalking along majestically after their long tramp from Samarkand or Bokhara, or kneeling down with groans, curses, and bubbling mouths, waiting impatiently to be relieved of their loads, down to the rows of fleet, smooth-skinned donkeys outside the hotel. Although my time was short, I succeeded in seeing the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Citadel, many mosques, and Memphis. In those days few white men ascended the Pyramids, why, I cannot say, for certainly few climbs can better repay their toil. Apart from the associations of the scene, the wonder of the great desert, which rises up all round to the level of one's eyes, threaded by the Nile, and the belt of green, cultivated land; the world-famed city of Cairo at one's feet and Memphis within easy reach—all go to make the view from the top of the great Pyramid absolutely unique. My companion, Danvers, one of our midshipmen, and I clambered up to the top unaided, but not without several scuffles with the Arabs, who then, as now, pestered one with offers of aid. We remained up nearly an hour, entranced by the scene, and on reaching the bottom again determined to climb to the top of the Sphinx, a feat not often accomplished up to that time, even by the Arabs themselves. I failed half way up, slipped and rolled down, fortunately on to sand (for there are many rocks and stones at the base), but Danvers—to the evident disgust of the Arabs—reached the top safely, coming down over the forehead and by the large blocks which represent the hair, a perilous track, which had never been attempted

before. We had both taken off our shoes to climb, and mine I found on my return to earth, but Danvers's were missing, and, looking up, he saw an Arab, having evidently stolen them, bolting across the sands. He instantly started in pursuit, the Arabs laughing at the idea of a white man catching a son of the desert. But they did not know that this particular white man could do a mile under five minutes. He quickly overtook the Arab, a large, brawny man, caught him by the neck, seized his boots and returned perfectly unconcerned. It might have led to an awkward situation, for we two youngsters were entirely alone and the Arabs a lawless, reckless set. But a Sheik came up just as we were preparing for a general row, and took us in charge, when, mounting our donkeys, we trotted off to Cairo.

Fired with a passion for everything Oriental, I now studied—with what meagre materials were within my reach—all I could of Egypt, the Holy Land, Asia Minor and Turkey. I bought a battered edition of Sale's Koran, borrowed an English Herodotus, Josephus, and some few books on travel, and—what became later of great use—an Arabic vocabulary, containing the simplest and most necessary words, numerals, weights, and so forth. With this useful, but superficial, equipment of learning, and knowing French and Italian well, and with a smattering of German, I was quite able not only to take an interest in Eastern matters, which grew and grew the more I knew of them, but to travel about and make myself more or less understood. For it was unusual—except very much out of the beaten track—not to find some one who knew something of one of the four European languages. Moreover, I could still read and translate Greek inscriptions, nor had my Latin deserted me, and this was an endless source of delight.

All this fortuitously acquired knowledge—for all know-

ledge is a matter of chance and opportunity—procured me throughout our Squadron a far higher reputation for general information than I deserved, which, however—like reputation everywhere, whether deserved or not—was not to be despised, as it got me many excursions with my Captains or senior brother officers.

I was only a few days in the *Doris*, and then was sent to the *Malacca*, a corvette—built of teak in the old days at Moulmein—carrying seventeen guns. She was weakly engined and a poor sailer. The Captain, Gerard Napier, was a sombre man, whom it was difficult to conceive had ever chucked a girl under the chin. I have travelled with him for days without ever finding out what he liked or what he did not like, for he resented *bonhomie*, and would shrink into himself at an allusion at which Hannah More or Mrs. Hemans would have smiled.

He was essentially a reserved man, one of those natures which never shakes itself clear of a mistrusting self-consciousness, and never quite at home, even with its equals. He never betrayed a shade of emotion, but always impressed one as a brave, upright gentleman, which, indeed, he was in every action of his life. He was friendly with me, and nearly every expedition on which he went, in Syria or Palestine, I went with him, and, though not well read, he tried to find out a little about things around him.

During our stay on the coast of Syria, forty-eight hours were generally the limit of leave we could get, and this to reach distant places, over bad roads, was very insufficient.

Whilst in the Gulf of Scanderoon I visited Tarsus. It was a difficult and somewhat hazardous journey, for the whole of that part of Cilicia was over-run by Turkoman nomads, living in their Kibitkas, and not over nice as to whom they robbed. I could at first get

no brother officer to accompany me, for we were told there was nothing to see and that Tarsus was "rot," but at the eleventh hour, Neville, one of my messmates, a most excellent and sturdy companion, agreed to go with me. We managed to get a mongrel Levantine as guide, who knew that *Lingua franca* which is spoken in the Levant and resembles Italian more than any other, and, mounted on a couple of the sorriest-looking Turkoman horses with extremely uncomfortable native saddles on which we perched like monkeys, or American jockeys, we started off one morning at about four, whilst it was still dark, making first for the Castle of Ayas, a place of immemorial antiquity dating back to the time of Cyrus, but, within recent years, the stronghold of a celebrated chief, El Kut-choak, who robbed caravans in good old mediæval fashion, this being one of the world's highways. The Castle, now a ruin, was occupied by a few wandering cut-throats, men and women, neither Turkoman, Kurd, nor Greek, nor any other known nationality; a sun-scorched, half-naked set of savages, living Heaven alone knows how or why. We were glad to get clear of them—gathering round clamouring for backsheesh—and found ourselves traversing a bare, deserted country and—as daylight advanced—entered a broad, sandy plain with tufts of camel-thorn here and there, the celebrated Plain of Issus: stretching away to the East. It is the scene of one of the most wonderful battles in history, and was particularly interesting to me, for I had struggled through the accounts of this very battle—with many a tear—in Quintus Curtius at the age of eight, and had never forgotten the astounding fact that the Persians, under Darius, lost not only 100,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and 40,000 or 50,000 prisoners, but that king's mother, wife, and his son, whilst Alexander the Great had only some 200 killed and 400 wounded.

However—whether true or not as to details—here was the field of this battle before my eyes, and I tried to picture to my mind the retreating Macedonians and the pursuing Persian hordes, until the former turned and stood at bay and then, by Alexander's wonderful generalship, destroyed this vast host.

After the plain our route lay through more fertile country, crossing several streams, some with difficulty, then through the Gates of Amani, a narrow pass by the sea-shore, and so through more deserted land to the banks of the great River Gihun, the celebrated Pyramus. This river we crossed in a ferry-boat, the steep, sandy banks making it by no means easy to embark our horses. But these intelligent animals, after we dismounted, knew exactly what to do, and approaching the crumbling edge of the bank, sat down on their tails like dogs, and let their fore-feet slide down into the boat, when, with a clever hitch up behind, they brought their hind legs over the gunwale. Across the river much the same kind of country met us, except that here were abundant evidences of game; gazelle, deer (larger than I have ever seen anywhere in the world), boar, pheasants, bustards, and wild fowl, with storks, cranes, and herons in hundreds. Our guide also spoke of leopards, bears, and large wolf-packs—up in the hills—in winter.

It was nearly dark when we found ourselves entering the oasis of gardens which surrounds Adăna, and it was night before we began to thread our way through the network of narrow and deserted lanes and bazaars which led to the house where we were to lodge. It was a wonder how the guide found his way, every street looking exactly alike; almost every house precisely the same, with low, white walls and no windows. Nor could we understand why he finally selected a particular door to thump at for admission, there being no sign to distinguish it from all

the others. However, he had apparently struck the right house, for he began a parley with a man who, however, did not seem anxious to receive us. But at last, after a great deal of talk—of which I could not catch a single word—he seemed to be over-persuaded by a shrill-voiced female, who stood behind him invisible to us, and our guide then told us it was all right, and that we could put up here for the night. It did not look promising, but there was no help for it, so we dismounted, the guide at once leading away the horses, presumably to some stable, and promising to return in a few minutes. Then the door opened wide, and we were confronted by a nondescript Levantine and his still more nondescript wife—the man with the face of a born rogue, with sunken eyes and a thin nose, the woman, a head taller than her husband, lean, very dirty and dark-skinned, but of striking appearance—both having apparently just risen from a pile of frowsy rugs which lay on a divan in one corner of the ill-lighted room. Instinctively, both Neville and I thought of declining their hospitality, but there was nothing else for it, so we decided to make the best of it. The man—who could not speak anything but Greek—made signs to us to enter, and the woman emphasised the invitation by shaking up the rugs and blankets on the divan, which emitted an uninviting smell as she did so. Then, catching up some discarded garments of her own, she departed through a small door—opening into a room a few feet above—closing and bolting it behind her. The man then motioned us towards the divan, putting his hands up under his ear and pantomiming sleep. We did not greedily avail ourselves of his offer, which, however, seemed neither to surprise nor offend him, for without paying any more attention to us, he stepped out into the pitchy-black lane, drawing the door after him, when, for a minute or so, we could hear the echo of his footfall as he stumbled over the rough paving-

stones, and the whine of the prowling street dogs as he kicked them out of his way. Then all was as silent as the grave.

Though not in the least alarmed, we both thought his conduct suspicious, for we knew very little about our guide's character or respectability, and nothing at all about our host's, who was by no means a person to inspire confidence. So we thought we would go into the street and wait his return: but when we tried to open the door we found it was locked outside. This was still more suspicious, for here were we, alone in this notoriously lawless town, prisoners in a low kind of den in the midst of a bewildering maze of lanes, our horses taken away, our guide gone, and ourselves not able to talk a word of Greek.

But we could do nothing, unless it were to rouse out the woman; so with what philosophy we could command, and our revolvers handy, we sat down on the divan to wait developments. After about an hour's time we heard some one fumbling at the lock; the sound of two or three voices reached our ears, and the door opened, when in came our host, accompanied by two villainous-looking Levantines. We had fondly hoped the man had gone out to buy food, but no, nothing of the sort, and what either he or his friends wanted I have never yet discovered. We made signs we wanted to eat, but he took no notice of them, sitting down on the floor looking at us, his friends sitting behind him. The position was awkward. There we sat staring at them, and there sat they staring at us, not a single word passing; the only light a feeble oil-lamp, giving about as much light as an ordinary night-light. In a short time, however, both Neville and I began to lose our temper, seeing no point in these dirty ragamuffins further vitiating the already pestiferous atmosphere. So, after a brief parley between us, Neville got up, went to the door and opened

it with his left hand, his revolver in his right, whilst I politely indicated by a wave of my hand that we required their presence no longer. The extra hands looked much astonished, but none the less got up and went out, leaving their host still squatting on the ground nervously chewing his moustache. Then Neville shifted the key inside, locked the door, and put it into his pocket. This manœuvre seemed to disconcert our friend, for he soon after rose up off his heels, took up one of the blankets from the divan, slipped off his shoes, and went and rapped at the door through which the woman had gone, where, after making her understand that it was neither Neville nor myself who wished to intrude on her privacy, he disappeared, but affording us a glimpse of his wife as she stood in the doorway, her dishevelled hair hanging over her thin, bare shoulders, her fierce, hawk-like eyes peering down at us under the light of her candle—a ghastly wreck of a once beautiful woman.

Left to ourselves, we now discussed the situation. The house-door was, of course, open to us, but we saw no advantage in going out into the street, where we must have lost our way in two minutes, and we had not the least idea where were our guide and the horses. So satisfying ourselves that the street door was secure by pulling a large bolt we found on it, we took one or two of the least evil-smelling of the blankets, made cushions of them, and placing them against the door leading upstairs, sat down with our backs against it, making it impossible for any one to come into our room without our knowing it. We took it in turns to sleep, and being very tired had some difficulty in keeping awake when our spell of watch came on. At cockcrow we were disturbed by a loud thumping on the street door, which we opened, to find it was our guide, with a boy leading our horses. We remonstrated with him for having left us without food,

whereat he affected both grief and surprise, and swore his friend had promised to attend to our wants. I told him we had had nothing offered us, when in simulated wrath he began a vehement attack on the inner door. In a few minutes the woman appeared, having huddled on an apology for a skirt over her night garb, and in a little time produced some dry bread and a jar of milk. Having devoured this very unsatisfying breakfast and given the woman two English shillings, we mounted our horses, and after scrambling over a pavement as rough as a reef, we found ourselves once more in pure country air.

Our guide now began to excuse himself for his absence during the night, saying that his mother, who lived in Adăna, was very ill, and he had, as a dutiful son, gone to visit his parent. As to his friend, our late host, he was a *birbone*, and his wife a *p——a*, and so forth, statements we were quite prepared to endorse. "Would we lodge elsewhere on our way back? at his mother's, peradventure, where his sister, who had been chambermaid in a hotel in Smyrna and knew the wants of *Signori viaggiatori*, would look after us?"

We said we would see about it. I believe he and his friend were about as arrant rascals as you could wish to meet, and I have no doubt they would have robbed us, if not worse, had we been unarmed.

Our road now lay over a fertile but sparsely populated plain, and we reached Tarsus without any further adventures. Unfortunately, we could only remain there two or three hours, just long enough to rest our horses and for ourselves to look about a little and to bathe in the River Cydnus, as we were pressed for time to be back to our leave. There is scarcely a vestige of its departed glory to be seen in Tarsus, and beyond a raised platform, some three hundred feet long, on which is said to have stood the palace and the harem of Sardanapalus,

nothing to recall its marvellous past. It is difficult to picture to one's mind, standing in its narrow, filthy streets, what this city must have been when that world-renowned voluptuary—who founded it eight hundred years before Christ—held revel in its palaces, himself clothed as a woman, surrounded by a crowd of concubines whose numbers even Solomon might have envied, recruited from every corner of the then known earth. From this very platform, too, was he driven by his rebellious captains to perish in the flames of his still vaster palace—at Ninus—together with hundreds of these same women, with his eunuchs, his boy-musicians, and with millions of treasure and jewels. Here, too, in these very waters of the Cydnus Alexander the Great nearly lost his life from their extreme chilliness, and it was, indeed, to test their coldness that we bathed in it, and were not surprised that the great Macedonian caught cold, or that Frederic Barbarossa died after bathing in it. Other events of historic importance have also taken place on this bluest of rivers, one which, though but the meeting of a man and woman, altered the destiny of the world. For here Antony and Cleopatra came together.

But last, though most important of all, a man was born in this city of Tarsus, whose influence has been felt from one Pole to the other by millions upon millions of the dead and living, and will continue to be by innumerable millions yet to come; not in this life and this world alone, but to all eternity: St. Paul the Apostle.

So we left Tarsus, I, for one, decidedly thinking that I had been well repaid all my risk and trouble.

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It speaks well for Neville's endurance and my own, that—in addition to rambling about for a couple of hours to examine the walls built by Haroun al-Raschid, and the Castle of Bayazid, together with the aforesaid platform

of the Palace of Sardanapalus, we rode certainly fifty miles that day before we were back in Adăna, and that on the very scantiest food, and on excruciatingly uncomfortable saddles.

On our way we passed through a field where a peasant had just unearthed a number of beautiful little terra-cotta Greek statuettes, only a few inches high, and one or two curious terra-cotta masks. Also amongst these things was a small lamp, covered with a black glaze, which I bought for a piastre or two, not knowing, until years after, that I had stumbled on a curiosity at that time, unique. For no example of this particular glaze had ever been found before, pointing to an art which was probably already lost at the time of Sardanapalus. Since then specimens have been found in other parts of Asia Minor and in the Ægean, so my lamp, which I still possess, is no longer of the value it was then.

It was nightfall before we reached Adăna, but, this time, we insisted on our guide finding us quarters less suspicious than his friend's, and not so compromising as we supposed would be his "mother's." He seemed much hurt—especially as to hers—and dilated largely on his mother's cooking, who, he said, we should now find quite recovered, and on the delights of the society of the sister with experiences in a Smyrna hotel. But, as we resisted even these inducements, he took us to a fairly large house—near a curious Persian mosque, which had an octagonal minaret but no dome, and was built of alternate courses of black and white stones, like Siena Cathedral. The owner of the house, a Greek—acting as British Consular Agent—was much surprised at our travelling without a Turkish guard, an exceedingly rash proceeding according to him, and did his best to make us welcome. He at once gave us some most wel-

come food and a bottle of sweet and potent Cyprus wine, and made us very comfortable for the night. He spoke some Italian, was well informed about everything connected with Adăna and Tarsus, and was very angry with our guide for not having brought us to him the night before. Of attractive manners, stooping figure, and a face of classic type, he claimed to be able to trace an unbroken pedigree from Philip of Macedon. His opinion of the modern Greek was very low, there being, he declared, scarcely a true Greek in all Greece nowadays, the present race merely degenerate Bulgars and other Slavs.

His wife was dead, but he had a beautiful little boy and a small girl, who woke up on our arrival and went scampering about in their night-shirts ; both, after the manner of Levantines, chattering in two or three languages. In the morning, when we departed, he insisted on giving us food for the road and another bottle of wine : with a delicate flavour. He called it Commanderie, and said it came from grapes planted in Cyprus in the days of Guy de Lusignan. He warned us against our guide, whom he instinctively knew must be a rascal, and also said that there were bands of Kurds about it would be well to avoid.

Leaving Adăna we pushed on rapidly hoping to reach the Gihun before dark; but when we got to the river there was no ferry and no ferry-man. To cross the stream—two or three hundred yards wide and running five knots—was impossible on horseback, so we were compelled to wait whilst the guide went to try and find him. He was away nearly an hour; night had come on, and we began to wonder if he had left us in the lurch. We had almost decided to return to Adăna, when he reappeared and informed us that the ferry-boat was two miles lower down : that the ferry-man was away, and that we must ferry ourselves across. A long and difficult

two miles it was, forcing our way through reeds head-high and floundering in swamps, in places up to our stirrup-irons.

However, we found the boat in due time and with some difficulty got across the stream and clambered up the other side. Our guide's conduct again excited our suspicion, for he insisted on turning down river instead of ascending it again, which we both thought must be the way to strike the caravan track over which we had ridden the day before. So persuaded were we of this that we declined to follow his suggestion, and turning our horses' heads up stream, rode diagonally across the plain in the direction we knew the road must lie, keeping our bearings by a star, and at once losing sight of our guide. In a short time we found this track exactly where we expected it, and, turning to the southward, rode on toward Ayas Bay. Towards midnight, hearing loud barking of dogs, we thought we must be approaching a Turkoman or Kurd encampment, and pulled up, not knowing whether it were safest to advance or retire. But as the dogs began barking more furiously than ever, there was no alternative but to ride forward and trust to Providence. In a few yards we found ourselves dipping down into a hollow, at the bottom of which we saw a number of fires twinkling, and in a minute or two after, in a big encampment of Turkomans, with camels, goats, sheep, and horses in great numbers on all sides. At once we were surrounded by a horde of gesticulating and wondering men, whilst dozens of dogs snarled and growled round our horses' feet. But affecting entire unconcern, Neville and I rode straight on to what we thought looked like the biggest Kibitka, and reaching it, jumped off our horses and went straight in—as one side of these large black tents is always open—where we saw ten or fifteen men sitting and lying about. A tall,

grey man, with a curious sheepskin hat and a loose Kurd dressing-gown garment fastened by a cord round his waist, now rose up and stared stonily at us. An inspiration led me to trust them entirely, and, whilst all these wild-looking creatures watched my hands, I undid the buckle of my revolver belt and let it fall to the ground behind me. The Sheik—as he evidently was—for a moment looked astonished, but quickly recovering his Oriental *sang-froid*—with a pleasant smile and a dignified bow—touched his heart, then his breast, and then his feet, the Moslem salute, saying—as he rose—"Salaam Aleikoum," to which I knew enough Arabic to reply, "Aleikoum Salaam." We were under his protection, and safer than in Scotland Yard. They then made room for us on the cushions, produced koumis and dried bread, and after giving us nargilehs and coffee, they prepared us a pile of mats and skins on which to sleep. Meanwhile our horses were taken away and fed. I cannot, however, say we slept very sound for we were besieged by thousands of fleas and other insects, apparently revelling in the taste of our unaccustomed flesh.

With the first glimmer of light we were all afoot; but now came an anxious moment: Did they intend to let us go unransomed, or might they be disposed to take possession of our horses? Of course it was impossible to discover what they meant to do, so we waited with some anxiety to see, well knowing that the law of Eastern hospitality and protection ceases immediately you leave a man's premises. But we need not have felt alarm; the Sheik, after making a friendly salaam, pointed to a pot on the fire in which pieces of mutton were bobbing about in a thick soup of milk and fat, and then, by gesture, invited us to eat. The food was excellent, or seemed so to us, and whilst thus engaged our horses were brought up, and a young man, dark as ebony, but

remarkably well made, stood at the side of a third animal, a wiry, shaggy-haired thing of some Asian breed. Our host then pointed to the sun, which was just rising, and then to the westward, dropping his hand suddenly, and then again to the south, a pantomime by which we knew he meant we had better push on before another night set in. We accordingly mounted, but with doubts in our minds as to whether to offer payment or not for our night's lodging. But there was something in the dignity of this nineteenth-century Abraham that made me hold my hand. So I took out my card and drew on the back of it a small outline of the *Malacca*. Directly he saw it his manner changed ; he knew at once who and what we were, and from mere courtesy his manner changed to one of extreme deference. He salaamed till I thought his back would break, whilst the news apparently spreading as to what exalted persons we were, a small crowd, including numbers of women, flocked round us. I made the Sheik understand as best I could, also by pantomime, how glad we should be to see him on board, and with a hearty shake of the hand we rode off, followed by the young man on the horse. At first I wished to save the man the trouble of coming with us, feeling sure I could find the way, but Neville, with a far better gift for topography than myself, declared he did not now recognise anything we had passed on our way up. Soon I saw he was right, for we got into hilly country, quite strange to us, and should only have found Ayas Bay by chance had we been alone. For it turned out that in the night we had missed the broad Caravan Route, crossing it at right angles without being aware of it, and were on a road which leads past a place called Missi, and comes down on the head of the Gulf of Scanderoon. However, we were rewarded in this detour, not only by our experience of a

night in a Turkoman camp, but by the magnificent views we obtained on the high ground of the Taurus Range. In front of us were the great Amani mountains, their snow-capped peaks an exquisite silvery grey against the pink morning sky, the immense plains extending from Adăna and Tarsus far away to the north-west, the indented coasts of Cilicia on one hand, and on the other the great Gulf of Scanderoon, blue as an amethyst, with the curiously jagged crests of the Pylæ Ciliciæ—where the Beilan Pass separates Alexandretta from Seleucia and Antioch—to the south: whilst, turning to the Mediterranean, far away on the horizon the faint outlines of the mountains of Cyprus, topped by snow-clad Olympus, looked like a floating dream, as befitted an island which gave birth to Aphrodite, that goddess whose cult—begun long before Eden—will outlive the Last Trumpet.

About midday we discerned our Ship, a mere speck on the shining gulf with many miles of rough country intervening. We had made good progress; our astonishing animals keeping up a brisk canter for hours, far less fatigued than we ourselves. We halted for an hour amongst the prostrate and highly ornate columns of a Greek temple and ate our food. Here a small spotted deer jumped out from amongst the ruins and bounded away, and a magnificent eagle, a mere speck in the sky at first, swooped down to examine our party.

We would willingly have loitered longer, but we still had to cross several mountain streams, some with considerable difficulty and also to wade knee deep an arm of the Gihun which debouches near Ayas Bay. Towards evening we reached Ayas, where our guide, after accepting a couple of dollars, took leave of us somewhat hastily, turning his horse's head and riding off at once, with every desire—as it seemed to us—to put space between himself and the villainous inhabitants of the

Castle. To the head man of this gang we handed our horses, and, after much wrangling, succeeded in settling payment. But for the presence of our ship, which rendered it dangerous for them to resort to evil practices, there is no doubt they would have detained us as captives. It struck us also as curious that they made no inquiries as to the guide, though possibly they were less surprised at his absence than at our return. For we learnt from our Maltese steward—after getting on board—that there had been considerable uncertainty expressed by some of the local inhabitants whether we should turn up until a ransom had been paid, as our guide was notorious as being a jackal for professional brigands. It is more than probable that his object in endeavouring to mislead us after crossing the Gihun was to take us into a trap where his accomplices were secreted.

* * * * *

My next trip in Cilicia was to Antioch, whither I went with Captain Napier and one of our lieutenants. On this occasion we were far better equipped, starting from Alexandretta on excellent horses with good European saddles, a Consular cavass, and a guard of Turkish soldiers. The road to Antioch—a continuation of that great coast track, over which so many of the world's great Generals have marched to victory or retreated in defeat—rises rapidly behind Alexandretta, crossing the Beilan Pass. A wonderful piece of scenery, with gorges of immense depth and of only a few feet span, precipices on all sides, waterfalls and forest, every coign of vantage crowned by ancient and ruined forts—dating back from the earliest ages—Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Crusader and Saracen—many of them even now—patched up and repaired—garrisoned by the bronzed soldiers of the Ottoman Empire. In many places this road has been cut through the solid rock by those greatest of road-

makers, the Romans, whilst in others their daring architects have flung across profound chasms airy-looking bridges, which, to this day, afford the only means of reaching the plains, without making a detour of ten or fifteen miles. For miles and miles the Roman flag-stones are quite intact, indeed the plain, where now morasses extend for miles, would be impassable in winter but for this causeway. The view from the summit of the Beilan Pass is extremely grand, the mountains of the Lebanon and the Ante-Lebanon seem here to melt into one, whilst with serpentine curves on a plain of intensely vivid green, rolls the River Orontes fed by the snows of Hermon; the white glimmer of Antioch with its distant Port of Suedia—the ancient Seleucia—to be discerned at its mouth.

We passed large raised mounds of hundreds of acres of extent, the sites of pre-historic cities, whilst farther off, between Antioch and the sea, rose thick woods, the immortal Groves of Daphne.

It is difficult to enumerate the things of interest that crowd on one's memory in connection with Antioch, for, with the exception of Jerusalem, no place in Syria or Palestine can exceed them. Its splendour seems to shine down the classic ages, culminating—in mediæval days—in the celebrated siege by the Crusaders led by Bohemond, which, as told by Gibbon, is nothing short of marvellous. The Christians, having captured the town, were themselves besieged by an army of Moslems, estimated at 600,000, who, however, were scattered by means not less miraculous than were the Syrian hosts of Sennacherib. For, through the finding of that Holy Lance which had pierced the side of the Redeemer and was carried before the famishing garrison in a desperate sortie, this vast concourse of Moslems was put to flight. It is quite immaterial that this lance-head was unmistakably a

Saracen weapon, whilst that which wounded the sacred body of Jesus must have been Roman. Nor does it matter that it was known to all concerned that a Marseilles priest, Pierre Bartolemie, had hidden it before receiving a revelation from St. Andrew the Apostle as to its whereabouts. In the inscrutable ways of Providence this well-planned fraud wrote the history of the year 1098, with all its far-reaching consequences both to Moslem and Christian.

We reached Antioch in the late afternoon, and were taken to the house of a leading Mohammedan, who entertained us to the best of his ability. During our stay we visited all that was worth seeing or that Murray could point out, clambering, not without risk, the zig-zag road which follows the ancient lines of the Roman and Saracen fortifications, still intact in many places in spite of innumerable sieges and earthquakes. These fortifications are themselves a stupendous record of Roman power, being nearly twelve miles in circumference, built, in places, where every stone had to be lowered from above, the builders slung in ropes over abysses a thousand feet deep. Below us, now shrunk to a tenth of its original size, lay the city, many of its gates still to be traced and one or two still standing. On an island in the Orontes Diocletian had built a palace not inferior to that of the Cæsars in Rome; whilst colonnades and covered ways intersected the town in every direction, which was farther adorned by theatres, baths, hippodromes, all on a scale of unsurpassed magnificence. Its population at one time may be estimated by the fact that in one single earthquake 250,000 people perished. However it is impossible in these pages to do more than glance at this world-famous city and its history. Suffice it to say that like Jerusalem, Palmyra, Carthage, Athens and Rome, the impression it conveys is entirely beyond

portrayal. It is something to feel inwardly and ponder over.

The road I have described as following the line of fortifications was extremely dangerous, in many parts a mere ledge on the side of a cliff, scarcely wide enough to afford foothold for our horses. In one or two places we had to dismount, crawling round corners where the road had fallen, our animals following us. But even these sure-footed creatures meet with accidents on this perilous passage, for a few days before we were there one of them, carrying his rider, who, if I remember right, was a British Consular Agent, missed his footing, man and horse falling some six hundred feet, and being dashed to unrecognisable pulp at the bottom.

We returned to Alexandretta on the third day, with no adventures worse than one of our party being stuck in a bog, he having unwisely got off the Roman causeway to ride across a tempting piece of grass. With great difficulty the dragoman and the guard got him on *terrâ firmâ*, but the horse was left, sunk over his middle. He was, however, rescued on the following day, when help was obtained with ropes and planks.

There was a fair amount of sport to be had in the Gulf of Scanderoon, the game, such as I have already mentioned, with duck and other wild fowl. *À propos* of duck, when at anchor in Alexandretta we witnessed a flight of these birds, whose numbers could only have been counted by millions. We first noticed a black cloud to the north which gradually rose higher and higher above the land across the gulf, advancing in the form of a gigantic wedge and sweeping southwards with a rushing sound, like wind in a forest. At last it was almost overhead, casting a broad shadow on sea and land, the whole mass in motion, and we saw that it was a thick cloud of moving feathers, which, seen end on, seemed one compact whole. But,

as it swept over us, we saw that each individual bird had room for its wings, though no more. We calculated that the base of the triangle must have been a mile wide, whilst the sides of it may have been two or three, judging by the time it took to pass over. The marvel of it was how these birds sustained their lengthy flight, but looking with our telescopes we partly understood it. For it was evident that those leading the flight at the apex of the wedge only retained this position for a very short time, drifting away to the right and left of the advancing millions, slipping back past the outer sides of the triangle until, reaching its base, they found themselves, not only completely rested by having flown quietly, but, being caught in the strong back draught of air lying in the wake of the mass, were *nolens volens* swept into the vortex and carried on. Thus the entire flock was continually changing places, the outer birds flying slower, the inner ones flying up, until—once more reaching the front—the supreme effort was made for a short time, but again to slip back and make room for others. I have often seen large flights of wild duck—notably in China and Japan—flying in great spiral curves and rarely more than two or three abreast, but these I saw in the Gulf of Scanderoon were flying as I have described them, and it struck me that if they had adopted the spiral formation the length of the column would have measured so many miles that the rear birds would have been too far behind to reach the alighting place before night with the others.

Truly a mystery of instinct, this great evolution, known to all these myriad birds, carried out with accuracy and precision, no jostling, no giving of orders, on, on, on, in never ending flight, from the frozen Tundras of the Yenisei or the Lena, to the Equatorial Lakes of Africa.

CHAPTER XIV

CYPRUS AND THE IONIAN ISLANDS

Near loss of H.M.S. *Malacca*—Wreck of mail steamer—Kismet and the Hadji—Exploring a harem—Baalbec the marvellous—The Cedars of Lebanon—Were not those of Solomon—Cyprus—Halima, foster-mother of Mahomet: her tomb—Paphos, St. Paul, and the Paphian goddess—Survival of Babylonian festival—The Ionian Islands—Sappho—Sea marvel of Cephalonia—A wedding and a fiasco.

AFTER a flying visit to Cyprus, where we remained longer later on, we once more found ourselves in Beyrut. Here we came in for a very serious gale, in which the *Malacca* was nearly lost. The anchorage is very exposed from north-west to south-west, and a dangerous sea sweeps into the bay with westerly winds. We were moored in St. George's Bay, named after a native of Beyrut, that fraudulent Army contractor whom England delights to honour as her Patron Saint. Our anchors would not hold: the engine broke down at the critical moment, and as there was no room between us and the beach to get under way under sail, we had to wait, all through the night, expecting at any moment to find ourselves in the great rollers breaking a few yards astern, in which the Ship could not have lived for five minutes. However, at the supreme moment a strong and unexpected current swept the vessel broadside on to the wind, thus

relieving the strain on the cables, and in this position we hung on until the gale went down next evening. The coast was strewn with wrecks; in Beyrut alone thirteen steamers had gone ashore, with small craft in great numbers; houses had been unroofed, quays swept away, and a great number of lives lost. But in the midst of all this a very comical incident was being enacted, showing a phenomenally Oriental trust in Kismet and ignorance of sea things in general. A large merchant steamer with several hundred Hadjis bound for Mecca—some to disembark at Jaffa, others going on to the Red Sea—went ashore on a reef off the Lazarette, where—breaking clean in two amidships—she lay forming a complete breakwater between herself and the land. Strange to say, every living soul on board was landed in safety, including the harem of a wealthy Mahommedan. But, at dawn, lamentation arose among these ladies: their lord was missing, and, as he had not found them, he must be drowned. A friend of mine, who witnessed their misery, described it as intense. Sitting in a ring on the beach, their light clothing drenched through, regardless of the liberties the gale was taking with their yashmaks, they wept piteously the live-long day, refusing to be comforted. Towards evening, the gale having abated, men put off to the wreck to begin salvage of luggage and cargo, and on going below into the saloon—half filled with water, as the vessel was lying on her beam-ends—they were surprised to hear a voice asking quite unconcernedly if the ship had reached Jaffa. It was the missing husband of the disconsolate ladies.

"Jaffa!" they exclaimed. "Why, the ship is a wreck, broken in two, and has never left Beyrut. Do you mean to say you didn't hear all the row and smashing of the ship?"

"I confess I was disturbed in my sleep by many

noises," replied the imperturbable Oriental, "but I only thought that it was after the manner of sea voyages generally, and that I should be duly warned when it was time to disembark."

"Well," said the European, "you have had a most miraculous escape!"

"If I have," replied the Mahommedan, "it is the Will of the All-Merciful that I shall see the Tomb. He alone is Great."

He then inquired after his harem, and learning that they were safe praised Allah for this mercy also, and landing made no remarks on his curious experience. What would not many of us give for such Faith.

To my thirst for general information and love of the unknown I was indebted during my stay at Beyrut to an adventure of some risk. I had hired a horse—an animal I knew well—and had ridden towards a river, which flows down from the Lebanon, with the not inappropriate name of Damour. In a solitary part of the great pine forest which then, as now, encircled that part of the Promontory of Beyrut, I came across a picnic party of Turkish ladies, with such suddenness that many of them had no time to pull up their yashmaks. Some were mere children of nine or ten, others girls of fifteen to twenty, and all more or less, to my unaccustomed gaze, houris from heaven. There was a flutter and general rising, and then a quick retreat towards a walled Turkish house a little way off: where they vanished. But one girl, out of sheer joy of life, had waved her hand to me. Completely puzzled at this exhibition of friendliness, and in spite of natural diffidence, I determined to accept the adventure. So I rode up to a large, ill-painted, half-rotten gate, and finding it ajar, threw my reins over a hook in the wall and entered. Before me was a large Turkish house, the windows all

carefully covered over with the usual carved screens denoting a harem. A broad patch of rough grass with some orange-trees here and there and a fountain with the stucco chipped off, lay between the gate and a door, partly open, which led into the house. Looking about and seeing no one—though I thought I saw eyes behind the wooden screen—I crossed the enclosure and, without any more ceremony, pushed open the door I have described. A sight, impossible to forget and never to be seen again, not intended for my eyes, presented itself.

In the Oriental gloom of a large hall, lolling in various attitudes on divans and on the thickly carpeted floor, unveiled, and in untrammelled *negligé*, were some ten or twelve women, old and young, and a number of little girls, whilst three or four negresses were carrying about nargilehs, and one old woman, black and withered, with nothing on but a petticoat, was making coffee. Instantly there was the wildest commotion, the whole bevy rising *en masse* with screams which might have been heard on the Lebanon five miles away; whilst the coffee-maker, dropping her pot, sprang at me with her claw-like fingers in the air and with the fury of a panther. I turned and fled. But the screams of the women had aroused some men, sleeping in the court-yard, whom I had not noticed. Instantly one of them rushed for the gate, and it was a race between him and me who should get there first. We reached it together, and I sent him sprawling with my shoulder, seized my horse, and, by marvellous good luck, was off before the others came up. I galloped off, but was quickly pursued by men on horseback, who seemed to have suddenly come up out of the earth, and it became a race. I owed my escape entirely to the fact that my horse, alone, perhaps, amongst a thousand Arabs, would jump, a circumstance of which I was aware. So, without

hesitation, I rammed him at a fairly high wall, and he flew it like a bird, over another, and then another, thus making a short cut to the high road to Beyrut, and—leaving my pursuers far behind—galloped on to St. George's Bay. I got on board all safe, and never heard anything more of the affair.

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I now made my first excursion to Baalbec, then rarely visited, but although I have been there four or five times since it is the first sight of its wonders that has graven itself most deeply on my memory. I was accompanied by a messmate called Heane, and we got there late, by moonlight. There were no hotels, and we bivouacked in the ruins. The splendour of those magnificent remains, seen in all the stillness and solemnity of such a night, weighed on one's imagination, surpassing any ideal one could form of such a scene. The six vast shafts—over eighty feet high—of the Temple of the Sun, the grandest temple ever built, loomed up from the stupendous base on which they rest—single stones of near seventy feet long placed with the regularity of dominoes—like some fantastic vision. Close by, vieing in magnificence, the Temple of Jupiter, the most decorated, the most exquisitely proportioned fabric that Greece or the East contains, larger than the Parthenon, and in better preservation. I have never understood, nor have I concerned myself to ascertain, why these wonderful temples are condemned by certain *soi-disant* architectural critics. To me, in point of grandeur and magnificence, there is nothing like them in the world; for even the Acropolis or Pæstum leave less impression on the mind.

We returned by the Cedars of Lebanon, the few remaining trees of a forest that once clothed these mountains, which, however, beyond their Biblical association, there is no reason why any one should go to the

trouble of visiting. As cedars they are poor specimens; as ancient trees the monarchs of Calaveras, in California, were thousands of years old when these Syrians were saplings—if growing at all. If I remember right, at their base most of these cedars were not over ten feet in girth, though two or three were, perhaps, thirty to forty, whilst the bark of the Californian "Mother of the Forest" (now in the Crystal Palace), is between ninety and one hundred feet. The special interest in these particular Cedars of Lebanon is based on the obviously erroneous idea that King Solomon used their wood to build the Temple. But, if he did come hundreds of unnecessary miles for his material to build that holy fane, it is only rational to suppose that he resorted to the same source in constructing the most accursed building ever erected by the hand of man, the temple of the Moabitish god Chemosh, or Molock—within bowshot, too, of the Holy of Holies—as well as for the planting of "groves"—a favourite occupation of this monarch of pious memory. And, if any one is curious as to what were the uses of "groves," and the kind of pastimes indulged in under their discreet leafiness, I would refer them to the Prophet Amos, the oldest and most authentic book in the Bible, or to any description of the Groves of Daphne—precisely the same kind of thing—which the vigilant eye of the Public Censor will permit to appear in print.

But quite apart from these considerations, I do not believe Solomon's timber came from this part of the Lebanon. Why should it? when one hundred and fifty miles nearer Jerusalem and in the country of King Hiram of Tyre, who gave Solomon carpenters and material to build with, there stands to this day, at Baruk and Maaser, far finer cedar forests, with the additional advantage, as regards Jerusalem, of being close to a considerable river, the Litâny, down which the trees could have been floated

to the sea coast without the least trouble, and there towed to Jaffa; whereas to bring timber down the Nar-el-Kelb—the Dog River—from the reputed site near Baalbec, to Beyrut Bay would have been difficult and dangerous—if not impossible.

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Cyprus.

The Island of Cyprus, as interesting as any place in the Mediterranean, was, at that time, still untouched by the hand of modern civilisation. Wanting to see all I could of the country I started from Larnaca, with a Greek guide who spoke Italian, on three days' leave, which was all I could get. The country round Larnaca, like all the southern part of Cyprus, is flat and uninteresting, although the mountains inland, with Olympus and its eternal snow, form a splendid background. Near Larnaca I went to see the Greek Church of St. Lazarus, the burial place of that Saint, after his final death, though his venerable bones are now in Venice. He became Bishop of Citium, the Chittim of Scripture. I also visited that most venerated of Mahommedan Sanctuaries, a very ancient mosque, situated near the Salt Lake, where lie the remains of Halïma, Mahomet's Bedouin foster-mother. At many Mahommedan Holy Places all over the world, may one observe the rapt devotion of the Followers of the Prophet, but in no spot is a more touching scene to be witnessed than here; men and women kneeling in affectionate, motionless adoration before the Tomb of this Arab woman, whose breasts had given life to the Friend of Allah.

Tempting as it is to conjure up memories of this most fascinating excursion, I must content myself with briefly alluding to the places of interest I visited. At Paphos—memorable for two very divergent events, the

birth of Venus and the capture by St. Paul of his first convert the Roman Pro-Consul Paulus Sergius—there were but few remains of the temple of the goddess to be seen in those days: only a few columns and blocks of marble. But the scenery is worthy of this beautiful myth, wild and romantic, with ravines, rushing streams, forests of oak, walnut, and fir, some of these last of magnificent proportion. Famagusta is dominated by the ruins of the huge Genoese and Venetian Castle, concerning which I find the following in an old note-book: "Besieged by Turks anno 1571. Venetians finally capitulate with promise their lives shall be spared: but Brigadino, the Venetian General, after surrendering is flayed alive; his skin is stuffed with straw and is hanged on board the Turkish Admiral's ship."

There were many things of interest here—streets with arcades of granite columns, ruined houses bearing Venetian, Genoese, and Crusader coats-of-arms, and mosques, which were once Christian churches. A magnificent town for many centuries, it is now nothing but a shrunken, squalid, thievish den, whilst as to the once famous beauty of the inhabitants and their seductive charm both are simply non-existent, for, taken all round, the Cypriotes of to-day are distinctly ugly, unprepossessing, and ill-mannered. But if their beauty leaves much to be desired, as worshippers of the Foundress of their City, no one can complain of their lukewarmness in her cult, for their morals are free and easy enough to satisfy even the Paphian goddess. Possibly it is some climatic tendency, indigenous, or due to some quality of the soil. There are other places in the world which exhibit the same proclivities. Many of the women in this part of Cyprus still adhered to that fashion of vast antiquity of dyeing their hair and nails a bright orange-crimson, and it is an interesting piece of

etymology to note that the plant—now called Khenna, or Henna, used for this same purpose all over the East and growing in profusion in this part of Cyprus—is identical with the Kupros of the ancient Greeks, which gave its name—Cyprus—to the island.

Rhodian plates were in profuse use all over the country, to be had for two or three piastres each, and now worth twice that number of guineas. Also some beautiful little statuettes, from Dali—the ancient Idalium—made of a soft stone. I bought one, but have unfortunately lost it.

Returning to Larnaca I was in time to witness a still-surviving Cypriote Festival, which was ancient even in the days of Herodotus, and ascribed by him to a Babylonian origin. For the curious, a full account of this is to be found in that Author's "Clio" (paragraph 199). Its great interest is that what we call "fairing"—especially in Scotland—is the unmistakable survival of this curious custom. For every woman in Cyprus was bound to resort to the Temple of Venus at a certain period of the year, wearing a band of cord round her head to denote servitude and there wait until some man threw her a piece of silver, which she could neither refuse nor evade the consequences of accepting. Such as were endowed with youth, beauty, and symmetry soon found liberators; but the ugly, aged, or deformed were detained a long time, from inability to satisfy the law; some waiting for three or four years.

The Festival at Larnaca is singularly reminiscent of all this, and has a most indisputable trace in it of the worship of Aphrodite, a name which means born of Sea Foam, the well-known source of the birth of the goddess. For a leading feature in this modern festival is connected with the sea, every one going out in boats, or bathing in the surf of the Mediterranean. And this

festival in Cyprus, though now chiefly a market for hiring servants, is still utilised for the selection of wives, and here again comes the similarity between it and the fairing custom in so many lands, where a piece of silver is given as a token and constitutes a legal obligation on both sides, as to service.

Dealers in women, Christian as well as Moslem, muster in force at the fair, coming from all over the East, and numbers of girls and children—parting willingly from their parents with the hope that there will be a change for the better—are bought to replenish the harems of the Turks. But should they not answer the description given of them by the vendor, or for any other reason not prove satisfactory, they can be returned, the hiring fees being refunded, and are sold off cheap at the next autumn sale.

We next visited Corfu and the Ionian Islands generally, which were then still in British possession and were extraordinarily peaceful, well governed and contented, with fine roads everywhere. But now all is altered—life in many parts not safe ; official robbery rampant.

I made many excursions in the Ionian Islands in perfect safety, frequently passing days and nights in remote Greek inns—Xenodokeion in clumsy modern Greek—in places where I should not care to go now unless well armed.

The Island of Corfu itself is disappointing as to scenery, its colour always sombre, as there are few trees except olives, and, though under certain lights, this foliage shows exquisitely tender silvers and greys, yet the general effect of it is monotonous.

I went to the top of Monte Salvatore, the highest peak in Corfu, a superb view of land and sea, with the Albanian mountains to the north-east, and fold after fold of hills in Epirus : across the narrow straits the Gulf of Ambrakia,

the scene of the world-famed Battle of Actium : numbers of islands stretching away to the south, Paxos, Ante-Paxos, Santa Maura, and countless rocky islets, with the top of Mount Ænos, of classic memory, in Cephalonia, upwards of sixty or seventy miles distant, faintly blue on the horizon. Then, nearer at hand, lay mapped out the whole of the Island of Corfu, the eastern coast-line forming a gigantic sickle, in the curve of which gleamed the white houses of the capital, the great British batteries and the old Fortezza Vecchia of the Venetians plainly distinguishable, whilst, on the other side, a gleam of water showed where lay Lake Kalikiopoulo and the River Potămo.

From Corfu we went to Santa Maura, the island sacred to the memory of Sappho, but as we were under sail and the lightest of airs kept us backing and filling off the south-western point of the island, I had no opportunity of landing. None the less I could fully realise that despairing woman throwing herself into the sea from the white rocks of the Promontory, which, jutting four or five miles out into the sea, and ending in a flat headland with perpendicular cliffs, was the scene of the tragedy.

Far removed from all human habitation, one can scarcely imagine a spot more fitting where to seek the solace of oblivion. I can recall my view of it as though it were only yesterday; an exquisite Mediterranean night, a gentle wind, laden with the aromatic scent of lemons, figs, and vines from the fertile valleys of Ithaca and Cephalonia, scarce a ripple on the water save, where parting under the bows of the corvette, it broke in mimic waves in the starlight, whilst, from the shore, came the soft-sounding boom of the sea as it circled round the base of the classic cliff. Above, one could easily distinguish the plateau on which once stood the Temple of Leucadian Apollo, and with the sails of the corvette

asleep, motionless against the masts, the decks noiseless, it was not difficult to imagine the spirit of that incomparable poetess—whose personality has filled all time—flitting above the waters that hide her bones.

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Argostoli, in Cephalonia, was our next halt—the centre of an immense trade in currants and wine—where is to be seen one of the unsolved wonders of the world; the sea running over the lip of the earth, and disappearing down some unfathomable cavity, from which, as far as man knows, it never reappears. Millions upon millions of tons of water rush daily down into this bottomless pit, and have been so running for millions of years. Where does it go and what becomes of it? Obviously it cannot merely connect one sea with another, for, in process of time, however vast the subterranean caves and hollows into which it pours, they would ultimately fill and the seas would stand at the same level. Moreover, it does not affect the level of the Mediterranean, for it has the oceans of the entire world to feed it through the Straits of Gibraltar. It has been calculated that in a year or two this flow would drain a sea as big as the Caspian. As there is no possible scientific solution of the mystery it is permitted to any one to theorise, and mine is that this mighty deluge of water reaches internal regions where the temperature converts it into steam, which, rising up into cavities, is condensed by coming into colder strata and forms springs and rivers of fresh water, perhaps all over the whole globe. It is strange how little interest attaches itself generally to this marvellous phenomenon for few people are aware of it; fewer go to look at it, and when they do, come away without grasping its incomprehensibility. "How funny!" I have heard more than one averagely intelligent person exclaim on beholding it; whilst a Naval Chaplain, with whom I first went to see

it, explained with painstaking lucidity that as the land had got a hole in it at this part, the sea must run into it. That was how it struck him.

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Our Maltese mess steward had a female cousin living at Samé, the ancient capital of the Island, the Samos of Ulysses. She was married to a Greek, and knowing that I was going to visit the Greek remains in and near that place, he gave me a letter to her. But first a word as to Samos itself. It is a most interesting place, with an old Marina, or sea-front, and a small harbour looking across the Straits of Ithaca, here about forty miles wide. It is still peopled with Greeks of ancient Greece as distinguished from the Slav Greek of the Continent, and one cannot but be struck by the beauty of many of its inhabitants: the accepted Phidias, or Praxitiles, type being by no means uncommon; a low, broad brow, with marked development over the eyes, straight eyebrows; nose short but beautifully chiselled, chin full and firm, and eyes with that peculiar, earnest gaze of the Periclean period. But this true Hellenic type is, to-day, almost confined to the lower orders, just as in Italy, where the pure Roman breed is only seen amongst the peasantry; a physiological fact, however, common to all lands. For the poor marry amongst themselves and transmit the type; but the wealthier take to themselves strange wives, adopt other modes of life, whilst their food changes with fashion and circumstance, thus introducing modification.

The Maltese woman's husband, by name Stamos, was typical of what I describe, with a bearing and dignity that would have suited the Aulic Council. He wore the old Greek dress, a long-sleeved quilted linen shirt, bound round his waist by a broad band of many coloured cotton, a short, pleated skirt, and white leggings. He had owned and sailed a small schooner trading along the coast; in

the currant season fetching up as far as Malta, Léghorn, or Marseilles, but, having made enough money to live on, had married his Maltese wife—herself a comely, pleasant-voiced woman speaking Italian fluently—and had settled down to grow instead of trading in currants. Their house, in which I put up for two nights, was pleasantly situated and consisted of several rooms, built over a large stable, where donkeys and mules were stalled. The living part of the house was reached by a broad flight of stone steps, which opened into a large hall, some twenty-five feet long by eighteen broad, fitted with broad divans and wooden chairs, the wooden floor strewn with rough grass mats on which a key pattern was stamped, sometimes of very complicated design—copied from blocks of marble in the ruins of Samos—the whitewashed walls ornamented with long Albanian guns and heads of the mufflon—the wild sheep of Corfu. An icon, with a small red lamp, kept lighted with all the care of vestal fire, occupied one corner of the room. Opening off the hall were the sleeping apartments and a kitchen, where all the pots and pans were clean and bright. The garden, of about an acre, bore a profusion of fruit trees, lemons, oranges, loquats, pears, apples, cherries, peaches, and a small, hard apricot, which, mixed with quince, made a most delicious jelly. Above and behind the house terraces were scooped from the mountain side, the supporting walls often built of the finely-wrought polygonal stones of ancient Greece, which the ruins above abundantly supplied. Some of these reclaimed patches of land were not more than six or eight feet square, whilst others were a mere strip, perhaps twenty to fifty yards long and only a few inches wide. On these, each with its little hollow round it to retain moisture, grew the currant vines, whose fruit resembles in appearance, though entirely unlike in flavour, an ordinary small grape.

With my host I climbed up to the ruined Convent of Hagi Phanentes, built on the remains of a Greek fort, and examined what was then uncovered of these interesting Greek ruins. The ground was strewn with broad, flat tiles and broken pottery, and a wide terrace supported by a wall eighteen or twenty feet high, constructed of chiselled stone, showed where the chief fortifications had stood. Another terrace, considerably higher on the hillside, is not unlikely to have been the Stadium where races in which young men and young women had contended for prizes in Spartan nudity, and where fights had been fought out to the death. In the afternoon we went to a wedding in a neighbouring village and merry indeed was the affair, though ending in a catastrophe. There must have been seventy or eighty people assembled, hailing from all parts of the Island, and from Ithaca and the mainland of Greece, a picturesque collection of persons, all in native costume and mostly of the agricultural class. But the bride, a woman of Patras, being dressed in a *décolleté* European fashion, was more or less a discordant note in the general harmony of colour. She was short and flat-faced, of great beam, and waddled as if bow-legged. Her head was decorated with an immense wreath of roses, geraniums, and orange blossom: from her ears hung long filigree gold-earrings, and round her neck and over her snuff-coloured and liberally-displayed bosom, a necklace of those large open-work gold beads which are common all over Dalmatia, and said to be of extreme antiquity. The bridegroom, a white-faced, uninteresting lad from Samos, five years younger than the bride, looked much more frightened than happy, and seemed more interested in an absurd spotted puppy than in the bride. The house was much the same as that of my Greek friends, and in the hall over the stables dancing was carried on with the utmost vigour to the strains of a

fiddle and a native instrument resembling a guitar. A kind of polka, in which the partners faced each in a close embrace, was the favourite dance, and the rhythm of their steps sent the whole floor rising and falling in an alarming manner. On and on went the dancing, couples occasionally disappearing to drink the strong wine of the Island, until, by night time, things had become distinctly lively. Some lamps were then hung up against the wall, but their light was feeble, or only sufficient to reveal closer gripping of each other as the dancers whirled and gyrated round the heaving room or sank fatigued on to the benches round the walls.

It must have been nearly midnight, and I was standing by the door, when, without a moment's warning, came a tremendous crash: the centre of the floor gave way, forming a V-shaped hollow, and into it fifteen or twenty people were instantly precipitated one on the top of the other, on to the backs of the donkeys and mules stalled below. Screeches and shouts arose immediately in the semi-darkness, the animals seemed to scream with terror, and those that were not crushed by the weight of the beams and floors began lashing out with their heels amongst the struggling men and women. All one side of the floor had given way, the people seated or standing there being shot down on the top of the dancers. I never saw such a ridiculous sight, such a confusion of arms and legs, for it was almost impossible for the unfortunate people to get up. Finally, however, the strongest amongst them managed to extricate themselves from the mass and pulled the others on to their feet, the fat bride amongst them, with her wreath off and her black hair all over her back, men with their jackets and white shirts torn, and many of the girls in a forlorn condition. Marvellous to say, beyond some bumps and bruises, no one was seriously hurt; though many limped as they

came out of the stable door: an old woman going off into a dead faint, and several of the girls crying and screaming in a quite conventional manner. Of course there was a babel of voices and much handing round of Krassi, though they soon got calm again. But it broke up the wedding party and we all returned to our various homes.

CHAPTER XV

THE SPANISH COURT

Atlantic seaboard of Morocco—Departed glory—Moorish marriage—A second Alhambra—A lonely daughter of Erin—Hyænas and Mahommedan burial—Dead man walks home again—Christian and Moslem treatment of their fallen sisters—Moor life in tents—Gibraltar—Cork woods—Spanish bloodhounds—Cadiz—Isabella II.—O'Donnel, Duke of Tetuan—Seville and Salambo—Justa and Rufina—Queen should have been a bumboat woman—Her *âme damnèe*, Patronicio the Nun—Pedro the Cruel and the great Ruby in the British regalia.

ONCE more on the coast of Morocco, or, to call it by its more ancient name, Barbary.

Embarking certain Moorish personages—who had been on a Diplomatic Mission and wished to return to various places on the Atlantic seaboard—we first visited El-Araish, a picturesque place situated on a promontory with bold rocks below over which the Atlantic rollers ceaselessly dash. Large forests stretch behind, the home of boar and hyæna, and of a race of man not less savage.

We roamed about the streets of El-Araish without risk of molestation, the Moors very friendly, as they sat, in the Bazaar—crossed leg and apathetic. A great many Jews are settled here, a striking people—with much personal beauty—keeping shops in which gaudy printed calicoes, with Hebrew characters stamped on them, made brilliant spots of colour where the sun streamed down

through the round holes overhead. From El-Araish we went to Rabat, the second capital of Morocco, a large town on the bank of the river, with Salee, celebrated for its Rovers, on the opposite side, but as both these places were intensely fanatical it was unsafe for us to move about without a guard. Rabat, with eighty or ninety thousand inhabitants, surrounded by immensely thick walls, is an extremely ancient city, the foundations of the walls ascribed to Ham, the Progenitor of the Berbers. I went to see the Prison—still in use—in which, in old days, hundreds of Spanish prisoners have breathed their last, and certainly more pestilent dens can hardly be imagined. "Yes, they are not comfortable," said our guide; "but then the people never live long in them, so what does it matter?"

In the fifteenth century, under Portuguese dominion, crowds of churches sprang up here, and all over the coast, now all ruined or turned to secular use. Unfortunately, too, the splendid reservoirs which the Portuguese constructed have also suffered.

Dar-el-Beida (The White House) was our next halt, a small, uninteresting place in a sandy, rocky plain, and from thence to Mazaghan. Here were four or five European families, living in old Spanish-Moorish houses, delightfully comfortable, with courtyards full of orange-trees. But the town was desolate, dirty, and unsavoury, chiefly consisting of mud-walled hovels with, perhaps, marble columns, from some ruin, at each corner, their decorated capitals standing high above the flat roof. The ruins of the old Inquisition—with Moors living in the cells which had once harboured condemned men—gave food for thought. A wealthy Moor had taken possession of the best part of the building and had walled off the refectory for himself, and the council chamber for his harem, whilst in the church, where stood the high

altar, several barbs were stalled. A pleasant walk can be got on the broad top of the sea wall, wide enough for two bullock carts to pass each other. Powerful flanking towers stand out into the sea, dashing harmlessly against them, whilst on the patches of sand, flocks of sandpipers, plovers, dotterel, and other waders are to be seen busy at work, or, on being alarmed, rising in clouds, with shrill pipings, to flit away to some other part of the desolate coast.

I made the acquaintance of Mr. Stokes, the British Consul, a very agreeable man, whose house, I believe, had once been a Portuguese church. He took me to see a subterranean reservoir of Portuguese construction which looked like the flooded crypt of some vast cathedral, the long row of pillars and the exquisitely proportioned groined roof, still in perfect preservation. The light coming down through circular holes in the floor above, and shining on the dead, flat water had a singularly beautiful effect. The water was from ten to twelve feet deep and a curious boat, probably of great age, lay water-logged at the foot of the steps, fastened by a chain that had nearly rusted through its links. The place was weirdly fascinating, and, after dinner, as it was a brilliant night, I returned to see the effect of the moon shining through the roof. It is difficult to imagine a more ghostly place, its ghostliness further heightened as some venerable rat, of which there were scores, crossing and recrossing, plunged into the water off the cornice.

Next day we witnessed a Moorish marriage. Crowds of people were assembled outside the house of the bride, who was brought out in a kind of large gilded box, followed by women in chairs, and, others, walking, all disappearing into another house close by. Some twenty or thirty horsemen were drawn up at the head of a long sandy road with temporary huts and shanties erected on

both sides crammed with spectators. In twos or threes the horsemen would advance towards each other at a furious gallop, firing their long-barrelled guns and flourishing them over their heads, and then returning to the top of the lists again. Every one seemed to be in the highest pitch of excitement, in which the horses shared, in spite of their bleeding sides and jaws, the latter twisted by the cruel Moorish bit. It was a wild scene: the men with their dark faces aglow with a ferocity that was not simulated, their long flowing robes a-flutter. One man, in his gallop, went full charge into a laden camel that had got in his way sending the animal completely over on its side, with the horse kicking and sprawling on the top of the pack. But in less than half a minute man and horse were up and on again, apparently none the worse for the collision, though the camel lay slobbering and swearing on the ground, until his load was removed, when he got up and looked extremely savage, as if not in the least relishing the joke.

Our next halt was at Saffi, or Asapha in Moorish. It also stands on a rocky promontory, but is hedged in by a high granite cliff, with huge rocks to seaward over which a grand sea perpetually roars. Our man-of-war boats could not land through the surf, so we disembarked in native surf boats, when, on approaching the beach, we were seized in the unsavoury arms of half-naked Moors and deposited safely on the shore. We called on the Governor, a dignified, patriarchal Moor, his mother a lineal descendant of the Prophet, and thence to call on Mr. Carstensen, the English Consul, and his wife, who treated us most hospitably. Mules being provided, and with Miss Turnbull, sister of Mrs. Carstensen, as an addition to the party, we started off to visit the remains of an ancient Moorish Palace, a miniature of the Alhambra, and hardly inferior to that wondrous structure

in the beauty and variety of its decoration. It is a vast quadrangular building flanked by handsome turrets, the interior divided in courts, halls, terraces, and galleries, with a seraglio—for the accommodation of two hundred ladies—where the decoration of the ceilings, elaborate beyond anything imaginable, still retained their brilliant colouring: with courtyards—in which were waterless fountains surrounded by thirsty-looking, marble lions, with their mouths open—the pavements tesselated with red and green tiles of a glaze now lost. The Mosque, a gem of Oriental architecture, was in a state of complete ruin, the dome fallen in, long green creepers swaying about with every breath of wind, and in the Mirabh, where pious Moslems once prostrated themselves, bats flitted and birds had built their nests. Approaching this spot we disturbed a large white owl, who, drowsily opening his eyes, spread his wings and floated noiselessly away. Could we have caught that sage old bird what strange tales he might have told us; perhaps about that unhappy Irish girl, who, captured by Sali Rovers, was brought to the harem of this very palace, rose to become the Sultana of Morocco, and whose great-grandson was Sultan of Morocco at the time I describe. Hers was a strange, sad story, too long for these pages, but one could not but picture to one's self this lonely daughter of Erin climbing the stairs of the Seraglio Tower which looked towards the sea, and praying for rescue that never came, or casting her eyes in despair over the great sandy desert inland ridge after ridge, ridge after ridge, until closed in by the cruel-looking Atlas mountains.

In a cool corner of the palace the Carstensens had prepared an excellent lunch; and after another ramble through the seraglio, we mounted our mules to return to Saffi. Our road lay partly across an extensive Mahommedan cemetery, whose prostrate columns of stone and

wood and freshly turned mounds of earth betrayed the hideous work of hyænas, who dig up the dead and devour them: an added horror being that, as the Moors get rid of their relatives as rapidly as possible, people are frequently buried alive and awake to find themselves in the jaws of these animals. Some of these semi-moribund, however, have had the luck to escape this terrible fate, and have been known to walk home again after their own funeral. A case in point of this premature burial, told me by Mrs. Carstensen, concerned the very man who was leading her mule. His little girl had died, and they had carried her, on a open bier, to the graveyard, but the child sat up and began to cry just as the shallow hole was ready to receive her. So they took her home again, and in the evening she was eating figs and playing with a puppy.

As in China, female infants are frequently destroyed in Moorish countries. The parents dig a pit ready, into which, if a daughter is born to them, they immediately throw the child and bury it. This question in ethics has been variously dealt with in all history. By the laws of Lycurgus no parent was allowed to preserve the life of his child without permission of the State, and before condemning the Moor for this practice we must especially remember that the submergence of a daughter left an indelible stain on the family honour in that country, and that to save them from such a fate was the prime reason for female infanticide, where the family was too poor to bring them up in moral security. With Christians this is quite different. Families wash their hands of their erring sisters and leave them to walk about Piccadilly or the boulevards.

We next visited Mogador, a thriving, well-built town with streets intersecting at right angles, and fine stone gates leading into the country, with shops containing all

manner of fascinating things—carpets, arms, Morocco leather pouches, yellow and red slippers, baskets of gum arabic, and of beeswax, ostrich feathers, and ivory, and, in the market, abundance of figs, raisins, dates, olives, young lambs, and other eatables. But it is a poor anchorage, and very little sheltered for vessels of any draught.

I went an expedition into the interior, and saw the Moor in his native state, living, like the patriarchs of old, in camel-hair tents, large semi-circular affairs, like a boat on its side. The costume of both men and women was scanty in the extreme, often a mere shift. The men seemed to do little or no work, whilst the women milked the cows and made butter by whisking the milk about in a goat-skin bag with the hair inside. One saw them ploughing, yoked alongside a donkey or mule, and, in addition to these labours, they spin and weave, tend the children, and, when they shift camp, carry most of the luggage. The better-to-do women were often strikingly classical in their appearance, with the folds of their haick (a long narrow linen sheet) draped gracefully about them and fastened at the shoulders with a large silver brooch, like a fibia. Almost all alike wore silver bracelets and anklets, and many of them strings of coloured beads. The children of both sexes up to the age of eight or ten were entirely naked. The Sheik of the camp we visited was very courteous, and, through our interpreter, narrated hair-breadth adventures with lions, hyænas, and serpents fathoms long, these last, however, living too far away for us to go and see them.

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We returned to Gibraltar, where Spanish dislike of the English was very marked, and many men still lived who had seen Nelson's battered fleet coming into the roadstead after the Battle of Trafalgar. On a certain occasion, riding in the cork woods—on the mainland—my mess-

mate Heane and I had an unpleasant adventure. We had pulled up to eat our lunch near a rough forest inn frequented by lawless, predatory bands of charcoal burners. I cannot remember how a quarrel began, but we had to assert ourselves, and with difficulty got to our horses, for knives were out, and, but for Heane's small pocket revolver, it is doubtful if we should have got off without injury. However, we did get away, and were congratulating ourselves on the fact, when looking back we saw we were being pursued by three large dogs, part bloodhound part mastiff, which, with heads down, were coming after us like the wind. We put our horses into a gallop, for well we knew the character of these dogs and that people had often been pulled down by them and then robbed or murdered by their masters. We were both well mounted, but the dogs easily overtook us, snarling and showing their terrible teeth in anything but an amusing manner. At last one of them, getting his teeth into Heane's boot, pulled the foot out of the stirrup, and he, being a poor rider, nearly lost his seat. But, sailor-like, he managed to cling on to the pommel, and on we went, whilst I, with a heavy stick I was carrying, by great good luck managed to land a blow on the dog's nose, causing him to relax his grip when Heane struggled back into his saddle. But the dog again attacked him, and once more Heane was nearly unhorsed. Then I thought of Heane's pistol, got it from him, and leaning down, fired it into the middle of the dog's back, when he rolled over with a terrific howl. I pulled up dead short and waited for the other two dogs, larger and heavier animals, for I knew my horse could not gallop another mile. But some instinct or, perhaps, the sight of their wounded comrade, warned them of danger, for they both turned tail and went off back. We then looked at the wounded dog, now, poor beast, sitting on his haunches,

growling and foaming at the mouth, but as we could not ascertain what injury he had really sustained, and thinking he might recover, we decided not to shoot him and rode on, reaching Gibraltar without further adventure.

But the trouble that followed on this affair was serious, for the Spanish authorities made a long and absolutely false complaint about it, demanding indemnity, and even that the officers who had killed the dog—in wanton brutality, according to them—should be delivered up to Spanish justice. A pleasant prospect for Heane and myself, for we should certainly have spent some months with the convicts at Ceuta or Melilla. However, the Governor of Gibraltar refused point-blank to listen to such a preposterous request, and beyond being warned that we must expect retaliation if we ventured into the cork woods again, we heard no more about it.

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Her Most Catholic Majesty Isabella II. of Spain was at this time making a royal progress through her dominions, and my Ship was ordered to Cadiz to do her honour. From the sea Cadiz somewhat resembles Venice as seen from the Adriatic, the Cathedral and higher buildings seeming to stand in the sea itself, the land on which the town is built being very little above sea level. It was a lovely evening, with a soft west wind coming in from the Atlantic, and as we neared the anchorage a charming scene presented itself; the tall masts of many foreign men-of-war, the bay covered with hundreds of feluccas and other sailing boats, with the white domes and handsome public buildings of the city for a background. Cadiz itself is, however, an uninteresting place, the streets narrow and badly paved, with no "side walk," so that you are in constant peril of being disembowelled by the long projecting axles of the country carts, or of having your feet crushed under the wheels of

passing carriages. But if the town was disappointing the inhabitants were not, for many were strikingly good looking. Of course, there was to be a great ceremony in the Cathedral, and the whole of Cadiz seemed to be crammed into the streets leading to it. I was nearly crushed to death in a narrow archway, and following the crowd I succeeded in time in getting into the holy fane. The atmosphere in the place was stifling, the fumes of incense rising thick: the perspiring mob struggling to get up to the altar, for a large and very handsome man, in a purple dress and wearing a gigantic green hat, surrounded by a crowd of ascetic priests, was performing a great prodigy, namely, absolving Her Catholic Majesty of all her sins and starting her off pardoned with a clean bill of health to begin again. It struck me as genuinely funny; and does still. Next day there was a *levée*, at which Captain Napier, Prowse, our First Lieutenant, a Marine Officer, and myself were present. Through the good offices of Sir John Crampton, the British Minister, who was very popular with the Queen, we were given the *entrée* and were presented in the private audience chamber personally and separately. We then followed the Court into the throne-room, and remained at the daïs during the presentation, giving us an excellent opportunity of seeing all the rank, wealth, and beauty of Spain. After the presentation we again went into the Queen's rooms, and here I had a long conversation with Her Majesty, in French, which she spoke well; the King Consort—a poor-looking, little creature with a high, squeaky voice—endeavouring to help her out, but speaking it very badly. She struck me as an affable, kindly woman, extremely plain with a lumpy, sensual face, but very pretty hands and feet. We were also presented to Marshal O'Donnel, Duke of Tetuan, a noble-looking Irishman and a great friend of the Queen's. In the even-

ing there was a State ball, differing in no way from any other such function, where the Queen, waddling about the room, recognising me, stopped to converse in a most friendly manner. Her jewellery was superb; a magnificent diamond tiara, and eight or ten rows of immense pearls hanging round her neck to below her waist. The Queen lumbered through four sets of quadrilles, in one of which the Captain of the *Tuscarora*, an American man-of-war, and myself were the only "white men," all the others being foreigners.

When the Court moved up to Seville, Captain Napier and I were invited to follow it. There were two train-loads of officials and grandees, all in blazing uniforms, and as we passed the wretched little stations crowds of peasants—looking like dried specimens of humanity out of which all the vital juices had been expressed—feebly cheered. Arrived in Seville the reception was the same as in Cadiz, differing only in degree, for the demonstrations of loyalty seemed here to be more personal to the Queen as woman. For she typified Sevillian instincts and illustrated its morals; this abode of Hedonism and of beautiful women—collectively the handsomest in the world. It is a city which not for nothing has Salambo, the Phœnician Venus, as its tutelary goddess. The Queen's arrival in Seville seemed to set loose all ordinary restraint: wine flowed in rivers, and its kindred spirit, Love, seemed to intoxicate old and young alike. No surprise was shown at anything; the mobs conducting themselves in the street in a most frolicsome manner, families, by mutual consent, scattering in all directions, a wife here, a husband there, daughters everywhere. Through these crowds, in gala carriages, rolled the Court, the people barely escaping being crushed to death; every balcony hung with coloured mats, every window crammed

with men and women, the housetops a mass of faces. But there was no spontaneity or true loyalty in the whole thing, nothing but an irrepressible love of pleasure. For the old Moor blood, more than half of all the blood of Seville, was at boiling point.

One of the first official ceremonies was the very apotheosis of fraud and humbug, the pious Isabella, surrounded by everything exalted in the hierarchy, prostrating herself at the shrine of Justa and Rufina, the protecting Saints of the gay city. Their story is typical of the ways of priests, and deserves a passing notice.

In præ-Christian days it was the custom of Seville—at a festival called The Adonice held in remembrance of the death of Adonis and of the inconsolable grief of Venus, to carry a statue of the Goddess Salambo through the streets. The two aforesaid Saints refused to do the required reverence, for they had recently been converted to Christianity, so the infuriated mob put them to death. Many centuries later, the priests determined to revive the festival of Salambo, as it brought in large sums of money, but the statue of the Virgin Mary was substituted for that of the pagan, and was carried round, headed by great ladies of Spain with all the signs of mourning which it had been wont to display for Venus. But now, of course, it is to commemorate Mary's grief for the loss of her Son.

It is not generally known that the Virgin Mary is practically a living personality in Spain; holds real estate and can be sued in the courts. She has a large staff of ladies, Maids of Honour, of whom the Queen of Spain is *ex-officio* the Principal. Estates and property belonging to the Virgin are administered by trustees for her divine benefit. It is not necessary to say where the money goes: accounts are audited by the priests.

Captain Napier and I were lodged in the principal

hotel in the town, situated in the Plaza de la Encarnácion, crammed from the ground floor to the roof with the nobility of Spain. My room opened on to a flat roof commanding a beautiful view, and the apartments next to mine were occupied by a Spanish grandee and his family; the daughter, one of the Maids of Honour, a very pretty, lively girl, speaking French fluently. As I met her at every turn at all these functions we became very friendly, and many an hour we spent walking about the flat roof, whilst she told me tales of the Court and of Spain. But this came to an end; for one night, after a ball at San Telmo, where I had danced principally with her, her mother came out of her room and found us still perambulating the roof, and suggested it was time she was in bed. As the first flush of dawn was gilding the waters of the Guadalquivir, it would have been difficult to argue otherwise, so my little friend departed. But she told me the next day that she had had a terrible scolding about it; that her mother had asked the Queen to allow her to withdraw her daughter temporarily from the Court, but that Isabella had refused; and further, that she was not to dance with me any more; an instruction which she, however, entirely ignored. A succession of banquets, gala bull-fights, and receptions now took place, and we lived in a whirl of braying bands of music, of street processions, military reviews, with religious ceremonies squeezed in when there were a few minutes to spare for things spiritual.

The stout Queen, with her broad face, her two or three chins, her small eyes, and large slack lips, surrounded by her ministers and favourites, did nothing to secure respect, and it was easier to believe that like a co-temporary King—son of a cowherd—she was also a supposititious child of a cook. All her tastes were

plebeian: loving a good dinner, a bottle of wine, and a bull-fight, almost as much as a new favourite. It was not her fault; she was made like that. She loved flattery: she got it wholesale as a matter of course, for though she did not really believe that she had the figure of a sylph, the witchery of Cleopatra and the morals of a saint, still she loved to be told she had. Her redeeming quality was a *bon diablerie* which seemed never to desert her, and would have made her a very popular bum-boatwoman on the lower deck of a man-of-war, or her fortune as a landlady of a "pub" in Wapping. She had, however, a mind of her own, for without consulting her wretched Consort and cousin she bore many children, some dying young to the delight of France, who wanted the reversion of the Spanish Crown, others living on to the despair of that country. I saw two of these children; the elder a dark, earnest little girl of about eleven, the other a still darker little boy of six or seven—with a diminutive face like a marmoset's—who lived to ascend the throne as Alphonso XII. On one occasion I had a long conversation with the Queen, who was accompanied by the Royal children and also by a very celebrated person—a nun, whose family name was Patronicio, a woman exerting an almost hypnotic influence over Her Majesty and always for bad—as events proved later. For the Queen—like many other sinners—was persecuted by superstitious fears, dreading religious censure, though doing everything she could think of to merit it. I remember that the little Prince did not return my salutation with courtesy, so the Queen put her hand on his black, close-cropped poll and ducked it towards me. The Infanta had very pretty little ways, with much dignity and self-possession. The Queen spoke familiarly to me, so that all ideas of Royalty or of her extraordinary life, its perils, its magnificence,

its importance in the world's history vanished, and she seemed merely an agreeable person. She asked me if I would like to be attached to her Court, but, as politely as I could, I said no, which seemed to surprise her. I also saw a good deal of the Montpensiers, and it was difficult to believe, if it were necessary to do so, that the Duchess and the Queen had had the same father. The Duchess of Montpensier was exactly the reverse of her sister, cold, austere, dignified and virtuous, a *grande dame* in every acceptation of the term, with a sad, disappointed expression as if the world had gone wrong. The Duke himself was a man of remarkable appearance—looking every inch a king—with the charm of manner of a high-bred Frenchman. There was a stiff decorum about the Palace of San Telmo entirely wanting in the Queen's Court, where, though etiquette was rigidly observed—with puerile survivals of an age when, by a king's command, the courtiers drank the water in which his mistress had bathed[1]—but underlying it all, dishonesty, frivolity, and licentiousness.

I had little opportunity of seeing all the marvels of Seville beyond a morning spent in the Caridad and a scamper up the Giralda. But I went all over the Alcazar and San Telmo with the Duchess of Montpensier, who was most gracious, and very instructive as to the merits of its wonderful art collection. I here imbibed my first appreciation of Spanish art. There are things worth seeing and stories worth remembering in these old palaces. I saw the room where Don Pedro the Cruel received in audience a man, under promise of personal safety, who had usurped the kingship of Granada. This unhappy fool, whose vanity was overweening, presented himself before Don Pedro in a

[1] Pedro the Cruel and Maria Padilla.

gorgeous costume ablaze with priceless jewels, which so excited the cupidity of his treacherous host, that he was made prisoner, was stuck up for a target for the lances of the King and his knights, and he and all his attendants slain. A jewel worn by this miserable man on the occasion was a magnificent ruby, and it is now one of the principal jewels in England's Crown. For to requite the Black Prince for his services, Don Pedro gave him this gem, and from him it passed to John of Gaunt, and then to Edmund of York, the Prince's two brothers, who, strangely enough, had married respectively Constance and Isabella, the two daughters borne to the Spanish King by his mistress, Maria Padilla. And thus the ruby came into the British Regalia. I was also shown a small courtyard of the palace, where Dona Uracca Osorio, a beautiful young woman who had refused Don Pedro's addresses, was burnt alive, together with the maid who had refused to carry on the infamous negotiations. Again, in a small closet, is plainly to be seen the blood-stain where Don Fadrique was murdered by this same Don Pedro. But Pedro himself met a deserving fate. After murdering his wife, Blanche of Bourbon, and strangling with his own hands the mother of his illegitimate sons, with countless other assassinations and crimes, he was himself murdered by Don Enrique, an illegitimate brother. It is curious that the blood of this most unconscionable villain, Pedro, permeates that of almost every Royal Family in Europe.

After the Court left Seville we proceeded to several places on the east coast, Malaga, Cartagena, Valencia, and so forth where loyal displays awaited Her Majesty: all precisely the same.

CHAPTER XVI

ALEXANDRIA AND PALESTINE

Federal and Confederate vessels of war—An official murder?—An apparition and a suggested explanation—Embark for Jaffa—A fool and his harem—Yashmaks and intrigue—The holy fire fraud at Christ's tomb—The Jordan pilgrimage—Dead Sea bathers—Mistaken sexes—Mar Saba and how the Abbot solved the difficulty—Imitatio Christi—The travelling Teuton and why he is popular—Steamer to England—Religion—Cholera—The raft.

WE returned once more to Gibraltar and here a curious incident occurred. There were, lying under the shelter of the British guns, two American war ships, a Federal corvette, the *Kearsarge*, and a Confederate cruiser, the *Sumpter*, a converted merchantman. There was a vast amount of tall talk amongst the officers of both ships about cutting out of their respective vessels, but as this would have brought either of them under fire of the forts ashore and of the *Malacca's* guns, naturally discretion prevailed.

One night, however, they did cause alarm. There was a ball going on at Government House, and every Executive officer in the *Malacca* was present at it, except myself, so I was left in command. About midnight, being on deck, I veritably thought that the American ships were attacking each other; for clear

and sharp came the sound of pistol shots from the *Sumpter*, and I naturally concluded that the *Kearsarge* was trying to cut her out. I instantly determined to see what was going on, and giving the order to man and arm a cutter—which was done in three or four minutes—I hurried off to the scene of action. As I got near the *Sumpter*, I saw, however, that there were no boats alongside of her and no sign of fighting on her decks, so I pulled on and got near her stern. A mile or so farther off I saw lights flashing about the ports and decks of the *Kearsarge*, and in a short time I made out that she, too, was lowering boats. I began to think things might become serious, being as completely puzzled as to what was going on as the *Kearsarge's* crew, so I lay on my oars and made the men load their rifles. Soon I was able to distinguish the *Kearsarge* boats and could hear the noise of their oars. Then the noise ceased, and I knew they were lying to on them. I pulled on to the *Sumpter* and was nearly alongside when, in the dark, the people on the deck of the *Sumpter* mistook us for a boat from the *Kearsarge*, and a voice hailed us, "Boat ahoy! If you come any nearer, darned if we don't fire!" "British man-of-war!" I shouted out, and ordering the men to give way, we shot up under the stern and I jumped on to the ladder. There was dead silence throughout the decks as I stepped up, though twenty or thirty men stood about with cutlasses and rifles. Then an officer came up to me and asked what I wanted. In reply, I asked what the firing was about, but before he could answer a tall, wiry man came up leisurely from below, and informed me that he had shot the Captain; giving, then, no particular reason for having done so, though he found or invented one later. I asked to see the body, and was refused, but I persisted and was taken

down into the ward-room. Seated round the table—mostly in their shirt sleeves—I found several officers, drinking whisky and smoking, with no evidence in their demeanour that anything unusual had happened. In one of the cabins—reeking of powder smoke, the door wide open—I saw a large man lying on the bed, and wondered how he slept through all this din.

"That's him as you want to see," said one of the officers, pointing towards the cabin with his thumb. I had brought an assistant surgeon in the boat with me, foreseeing possible eventualities, and we went in and looked at the man. He was stone dead, shot through the heart and in several other places. "Must have been shot asleep, and divil an inch has he budged," said our Irish Sawbones.

"Say, will you have a drink?" asked an officer, as we came out of the dead man's cabin.

I declined; but the unlucky assistant surgeon accepted. They poured him out half a tumbler of whisky, and, filling it up from a decanter he tossed it off at a gulp. Accustomed as he was to the stiffest grog I saw it made even him reel. We then went on deck and called the boat alongside, said, "Good-night" to the officers and rowed alongside our own ship. But before we got on board, the assistant surgeon was literally dead drunk, for what he supposed was water in the decanter had been white Bourbon whisky, and he had swallowed over half a pint of the very strongest spirit. Meanwhile, as before leaving the *Malacca*, I had sent word ashore to Captain Napier, as to what had happened, he had arrived on board. After my report he naturally wished to hear that of the assistant surgeon. But that ill-starred individual was lying in his cabin as speechless as the dead man on board the *Sumpter* and, of course, could not appear. I need not enter into the sequel of

this shooting affair, except to say that it became a matter of lengthy diplomatic correspondence between our Government and that of the United States. For the murderer was made a prisoner and taken ashore, and then the Federal Government claimed him on the plea that a Neutral Power could not detain a rebel and so on. Eventually he got off; returned to the United States and was held in great admiration by every one; though Heaven and America only knew why. The assistant surgeon was tried by Court Martial and dismissed the Service: he and the dead man the only two who came badly out of the business.

* * * * *

Soon after this we went East again and found ourselves once more in Alexandria. Here my promotion to Lieutenant was waiting for me, so I landed and left my ship, taking my light kit and sending my chest and heavy things home by steamer, determined to see what I could of the East as long as my money lasted, and trusting to Providence to get home somehow or other.

And now I had a curious psychological experience which is worth recording, though I can offer no kind of solution of its mystery. An old shipmate of mine, by name Edwardes, assistant surgeon with me in the *Retribution*, had set up in Alexandria in private practice. I had lost sight of him for years and knew nothing of his private history since he had left the Service. But he had heard of me from a mutual friend, Dr. Brigstocke of Beyrut, and had written to ask me to put up with him if I found it convenient. This I was very glad to do, to give me time to look about, and, on landing in Alexandria, I went straight to his house. When I got there I found he had been called away to see a patient some distance from Alexandria, but had left

orders for my entertainment. His Arab servant showed me to my room, a large apartment, and after changing I went downstairs to dinner. I dined alone, strolled out afterwards, and later went home to bed. Edwardes had not returned.

In the night I awoke and distinctly saw a tall woman standing in the middle of the room and naturally thought some one had mistaken the apartment. I put up my eyeglass, which invariably hung round my neck at night, and saw her features plainly, with small curls on her forehead. She was dressed in a long, shiny black dress cut square, with a broad lace collar hanging over the breast. I was particularly struck with the deadly pallor of her face and the vacant look of her eyes which seemed turned to me and yet not to see me. There appeared to be nothing uncanny about her except the supernatural silence which surrounded her; the room so still that I might have heard her breathe. I am sure I watched her for over a minute and then I moved to get up, when she seemed to turn and walk towards a large press in the wall, which I had not before noticed, where she vanished. The impression of the bodily presence of some one was so strong that I jumped out of bed, went across the room—thinking the cupboard might lead into another—and opened the door through which I thought the woman had passed. The moon, as bright as day, streamed into the cupboard and there, facing me, was a long black dress, with a broad lace collar, hanging on a peg. I was simply amazed. I pushed the dress aside, but there was nothing behind it, and I examined the cupboard in every way. There were many other female garments in it, besides shoes, stockings, hats, all piled in pell-mell. Wondering who the owner might be—some friend of Edwardes' doubtless

and no business of mine—I went to bed again absolutely persuaded that some living being had been in the room, and had got away somehow, and was soon asleep. In the morning I met Edwardes at breakfast and we had much talk of old days, but I purposely refrained from any allusion to what had passed in the night. I soon learnt from him, however, that he had been married, and he incidentally mentioned that his wife had recently died, and in the room now occupied by myself. I still held my peace for I thought it would distress him, whatever might be his point of view. These being almost pre-photographic days there was no portrait for me to see, so I had no confirmation of her identity with the impression of the night, beyond that he said that his wife had been tall with dark curls. I have no possible explanation to offer of this: unless science can demonstrate—as it may hereafter—that through radio-activity atoms are given off living corporeal substances which, still floating about detached impinge on brains in a receptive condition and produce impressions which, with our present limitations, we call supernatural. If the ultimate "fluid" (behind radium) can pass through a foot of iron or sheets of plate-glass, why not through the thickest skull ever born?

Keen to revisit Cairo and to go up the Nile, I had no money to do it with, but had quite determined to travel through Palestine and Syria, even if I had to beg my way; possessed of an irresistible desire to see these lands, bound up with my earliest teachings. By good luck, on board the steamer which was carrying me to Jaffa with very indefinite ideas of what I was going to do, I fell in with an Englishman, who was also about to travel in these parts, and he most kindly permitted me to tack myself on to his caravan, making my own arrangements with his dragoman. He turned out to

be a most delightful travelling companion and we spent many happy days together. On board this little steamer there was a Pasha on his way to take up office as Vali in some part of Armenia. He was a typical Turk—short, squat, fanatical, overbearing—seeming to think the whole ship belonged to him and every European mere dirt under his feet. The saloon and first cabins were in a deck house, with long gangways on each side; my cabin was the only one of these which looked into this gangway. The gangway itself had been boarded in, both forward and aft, making a long kind of room, and here the Pasha's harem were enclosed, with a guard of Ottoman troops at either end. But the Pasha had evidently overlooked this window of mine, not three feet off the deck and large enough for any one to pass through. I happened to look out of my window and caught the eye of a young Turkish woman, unveiled and quite at her ease. She did not seem the least concerned and nudged her neighbour, a much older woman. These told others, and in a minute or two a giggling, laughing crowd, some ten or twelve in all, were pushing and elbowing each other to get a peep at the Giaour. Not one attempted to put up her veil or even to cover her shoulders. They were of diverse nationalities, Turks, Armenians and Circassians, the youngest perhaps twelve or thirteen, the oldest grey-haired and wrinkled. Although I could not talk a word of Turkish we made rapid progress in our friendship. Then one ran to each end of the place and listened: evidently the guard had not been disturbed by their noise. However, after a little time, an old negress, who was evidently in charge of them, made them come away from my window, and, as it was about ten o'clock, they all lay down on piles of mattresses which encumbered the deck, and pulled their quilts over them.

Hardly had they done so than in stalked the surly, old Pasha; looked about him, and called the old negress to his side, held a brief parley with her and then retired to the saloon where I saw him, soon after, sitting at the table. I could not help smiling at his ridiculous, self-complacent manner, as if exempt from natural law; with his harem safe under lock and key, his faithful negress and his guards to keep watch. At the same time I felt sure that it would have gone hard with many of these women if this old brute had caught them amusing themselves with a Giaour, however innocently. I saw them all again in the early morning, but they were very cautious, and, fearing to get them into trouble, I closed my port. They did not disembark at Jaffa, and as I left the steamer I saw the awning curtain which enclosed them lifting at its corners and thought I saw a smile in some of their eyes, and caught the sound of more merriment. Poor things! What a life! It is quite a mistake to suppose, however, that there are no cakes and ale in their lives. On the contrary, in all large towns, this very custom of wearing the yashmak greatly facilitates intrigue, notably in Constantinople, Cairo, Beyrut, and other large Eastern towns. For they are allowed out in twos and twos, and, like other cloistered ladies, hunt in couples. And nowadays the yashmak is no longer anything but a symbol, exercising as little restraint as a wedding ring in Europe.

We landed at Jaffa in the usual way, in large boats manned by the splendid Syrian boatmen, and, with not less difficulty than is customary, found ourselves ashore in Palestine. Neither in Jaffa nor Jerusalem was there ordinary accommodation, except in one's own tents, for in those days there were few hotels and those bad. It happened to be Easter, and I went down on Easter Eve to see the Greek ceremony of the Holy Fire at the Holy

Sepulchre. I came near losing my life in the terrific crush at the entrance of the church, a surging mass of pilgrims of all nationalities striving to get in to benefit by the spiritual advantages of that grotesque fraud. It is needless to describe this monstrous swindle; countenanced by the highest of the Orthodox clergy, and practised on the spot where there is little doubt once lay the body of the Redeemer.

The crowd was terrible, men and women dropping down to be trodden to death by the excited mob: the Turkish soldiers keeping order with their naked bayonets. After it was over thirty dead bodies were found in or near the Holy Sepulchre, for the brute instinct of self-preservation had triumphed over every feeling of manliness or humanity, the strong striking down the weak, like the French in their Charity Bazaar fire. Cries and groans filled the air, darkened as it was by the smoke of thousands of candles lighted at the Sacred Flame of the Holy Spirit, squirted through a hole by a Greek priest, a regular Jack-in-the-box trick. But it is a fundamental and all-important dogma in that Creed, conferring authority on the priesthood as the Intercessory with the Almighty, whilst the people whose ignorance and superstition are traded on, believe themselves to be in the Presence of the actual and veritable Holy Ghost. They travel thousands of miles, sell their farms, and often their daughters, to enjoy this inestimable privilege, and at the end of their weary journey over land and sea are content to be trampled to death in the throng of their co-believers.

I also witnessed the great annual Festival of Re-baptism in the Jordan. A vast crowd of pilgrims—protected by a Mussulman guard—streamed out of Jerusalem and the neighbouring villages to the banks of the holy river, people of all creeds apparently, but chiefly Orthodox. On they struggled, down the steep road which leads

to Jericho, across the sweltering sandy plain, amidst brambles and camel-thorn, to camp for the night amongst the tamarisks and willows on the river bank, where they passed their time singing low, monotonous hymns, waiting for the dawn.

Then comes a curious scene, in the ecstasy of devotion all decorum seems cast aside, men, women, boys, and girls, packed closely on the bank, strip, and wrapping themselves with winding sheets brought for the purpose, plunge hysterically into the stream, fathers, mothers, children, kissing and embracing each other, throwing the sacred water over their heads, scooping it up in their hands, lying down in it: chattering in a confused babel of tongues. Their bath over, the banks are lined with people donning their clothes, all completely indifferent to the presence of others, and gradually they reform in long strings and begin their journey back across the plain, reaching Jericho before dark. But every one is careful to preserve the linen in which he or she bathed. It is to be their winding sheet, and to be buried in it ensures heaven hereafter. Strange as it is, the most sceptical and indifferent cannot easily turn away from it without feelings of reverential sympathy. For beyond historic doubt their Redeemer was baptized in these very waters.

But it is not the poor alone who come to the Jordan for this purpose, for on the bank were erected numbers of tents for the wealthy, whilst standing a little apart was the camp of a Russian Imperial Highness, with the Imperial flag of Russia floating over it. From these tents emerged a bevy of ladies, six or seven, clad in loose white linen wrappers, headed by a Greek priest carrying an icon, and by bishops and archbishops in their robes, the rear of the procession brought up by some more priests chanting a litany. Then the august personages

were handed down previously-prepared wooden steps and the archbishop, holding up his vestments, stepped into the water, and, filling a small gold bowl, poured the sacred stream copiously over the illustrious pilgrims until they were completely soaked. This accomplished, the ladies came up out of the river, when attendants threw cloaks over their dripping bodies—after the manner of Trouville or Dieppe—whilst the choir of priests continued chanting their litanies and the man with the icon—a portrait of St. John the Baptist—brought the sacred object to be kissed. The solemnity of the ceremony, however, was considerably impaired by the ludicrous appearance of the archbishop, with his dripping robes held up and his skinny legs, as hairy as those of Balkis, Queen of Sheba, showing up to his knees, he himself groaning away at the litany in a voice that suggested that he was suffering from some acute internal pain.

Our own immediate party had been augmented, before leaving Jerusalem, by two ladies entrusted to our care, the daughters of a bishop, but being warned by our dragoman that we should find ourselves amongst fifteen hundred or two thousand men and women practically in a state of nature, we arranged that they should see what was going on apart from us: or not at all, if they so chose. They left us after the festival, returning to Jerusalem under another escort, for we were going on to the shores of the Dead Sea, whither our camp had preceded us.

It is a long fatiguing ride, and as we neared the Dead Sea we saw that there was another camp pitched near ours, and observed two people bathing, their closely-cropped heads bobbing about in the water, one with a brick-red face, the other thin and sallow, the former performing sundry aquatic antics, such as rolling over and over like a ball, with arms and legs of much muscular

development, in evidence. The paler person, however, indulged in no frolics, merely bobbing up and down after the manner of ladies bathing. Both were dressed in suits of striped pyjamas of thin Indian fabric.

We reached our camp just before dark and had dinner, and during the meal our dragoman informed us that the people in the next camp were an Indian Judge and his wife, and that they had sent word asking if we would allow them to join our party next day, if it was our intention to ride to Mar Saba, as it was an unfrequented route, often infested by prowling Bedouins. We said we should be delighted, and that we would come round and pay them a visit. We discussed our neighbours in the usual way, deciding that the Judge seemed a good kind of a fellow, but that we did not think much of his white-faced wife. As soon as our meal was over we walked over to their tents and were ushered in by the dragoman, when, to our amazement, behold, the owner of the brick-red face appeared in woman's garb, whilst the pale-faced was attired in man's. We had mistaken the sexes, when they were disporting themselves in those briny waters, and it was even now difficult to realise that they were not masquerading in each others dress. We spent a pleasant hour with them and learnt that the pale-face had been a Judge of the Supreme Court in Bengal, and the partner of his bosom had been the widow of a Hooghli pilot. They were both kind and pleasant, and the sense of incongruity in their size and nature wore off when one began to realise that her strength and health were a necessity of existence for the man who the blind-hookey of marriage had entrusted to her considerate keeping.

We made a late start next day, for Mar Saba, which was unwise, for we had a stiff, difficult journey before us over the worst road in Palestine, long, steeply sloping lime-

stone slabs, where even a fairly nimble cat might feel uneasy, as a slip certainly meant death. A wild, desolate land this, as befits it seeing it was here that that much ill-used animal, the scapegoat, was annually set adrift with the sins of Israel on its back. However, it speaks well for the early Jews that one goat was enough. They would require a numerous flock nowadays in Park Lane to pull it off with any success. The mountains of Moab, behind us, were a mass of crimson, and the jagged peaks of Judea in front were already black and gloomy against the evening sky before we emerged from this dangerous pass, and began dimly to distinguish the gigantic buttresses which support the great Convent of Mar Saba. It was not difficult to believe, as our dragoman told us, that numbers of lives had been sacrificed in building these wondrous walls, seeing that every stone had to be put in place by men suspended by ropes from above. But if the same class of persons were employed in this perilous work as now occupy its interior, one could console oneself with the idea that a somewhat cynical Providence occasionally allowed the rope to chafe through or forgot to take a round turn with it overhead. For a more depraved, useless set of human beings than these monks it would be difficult to discover, except perhaps in Tibet.

It was almost pitch dark when we arrived under the walls, and here we were met with the pleasant news that our camp had not turned up, though it had started several hours before us. The man in charge had sent on a messenger to say that some of the animals had stuck in a soft chalky gorge at the foot of the hills, and that it was quite impossible to attempt the ascent in the dark. The difficulty was Mrs.——; for, for thirteen hundred years, the foot of woman had never profaned the sacred soil of Mar Saba, and therefore it was necessary for us to remain

outside its walls for the night, or leave the lady to take her chance of Bedouins and hyænas. This, of course, was not to be thought of, for all the valour of the stout arm and the iron muscle under her feminine garb. In later years a large detached tower was built for the accommodation of travellers; with a long ladder leading up to a door, placed twenty or thirty feet above the ground, but, at the time I speak of, there was nothing of the kind, and benighted travellers took their chance. As to the Bedouins, it appeared there was no fear at that particular time, but the monks declared that several hyænas were prowling about, and that it would not be safe to bivouac outside. The lady, however, scorned such fears, but not so her husband, evidently a timid person. "It's all very well for *her*," I heard him muttering with evident resentment in his voice; "no hyæna would touch her."

"But Bedouins, they mightn't mind?" some one suggested.

"Bedouins be d——d!" he was getting irritable; "I shouldn't like to be the Bedouin who tackled her!"

Finally, after an interminable parley in private with the Abbot, our dragoman suggested that His Holiness should come and himself cast eyes on the lady, undertaking further to go bail that there should be no scandal. Possibly not unwilling for the adventure, the pious man came and peeped through a small hole in the great gate and inspected the party, but whether he had the same difficulty as we had had in distinguishing her sex, or whether he thought that the morals of the convent could not be affected by the presence of a woman, the like of whom he, or few others, had ever seen, we never knew; and the dragoman refused to say. Suffice it to say, that instead of being left to the mercies of wandering animals, she and her husband were finally hoisted up the wall, and deposited for the night in a watch tower overhanging

the gate. We weaker vessels, however, were admitted through the heavy narrow gate into an outer part of the cloister, where we were provided with rugs and blankets, anything but clean, but welcome enough to keep out the bitter cold wind that howled over us.

It is a desolate spot, this Convent of Mar Saba, and has been a recognised sanctuary for criminals of all nations from time immemorial. Every nationality is represented by its inmates and every crime has its example, murderers chiefly predominating. Many of the monks are mere criminal lunatics, but no questions are asked when they seek asylum. It is supposed that regicides lurk amongst them, which is quite likely. For many never open their lips to each other; indeed silence is one of the rules of the place. It is largely supported by contributions from all civilised countries, especially by Russia. The monks are not required to make any protestation of Faith, but whatever their creed may be they are compelled to spend many hours a day in prayer in the Greek Orthodox church, the central object in the place. They are fed very sparsely, and seem to spend their whole day in sleep, or in feeding the curious and beautiful black and yellow ravens which wheel in great flocks below the parapets overhanging the cliffs. The history of the Convent is curious. It was built over a cave in memory of a saintly personage called Saba, who lived here about A.D. 480, for many years in company with a lion. Mar Saba, like England's patron Saint, St. George, was a Cappadocian.

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Next morning—with a sense of escape from a polluted atmosphere—we mounted our horses to return to Jerusalem. We took the road through the wilderness of Judea, commanding a magnificent view of the Dead Sea, with the convent in the foreground—its chapels, rock

chambers, cupolas and hanging galleries, a bewildering labyrinth—and camped next on the site of the Herodium, commonly called the Frank Mountain, where we explored the remains of the palace and the tomb of Herod the Great.

Continuing our journey next day we met a very curious character, an American, grotesquely typical of his nation in manner and in dress; wearing a tall hat, a much-worn, black frock-coat, no waistcoat or collar, and corduroy trousers tucked into long boots, cracked beyond mending. He was leading a donkey with a sack on its back for a saddle, and large goat-hair bags swinging on each side, in one of these, a Bible, about two feet square, numbers of tracts in English, Syrian, Turkish, and Arabic, a tin pot for making tea, a tin platter and a fork; in the other what change of clothing he had with him, and a blanket. In one hand he carried a black bag which contained, in addition to some remnants of food, sticking-plaster, several boxes of Cockle's pills, dentist's implements, chiefly extractors, creosote, and cotton wool. In the other hand he bore a telescope, about three feet long, but why, not even he could explain, as it was perfectly useless, the object-glass being cracked right across.

In personal appearance he was not less remarkable than his outfit—tall, lean, narrow-chested; a thin, pale face out of which looked a weary, glittering pair of dark eyes, a weak mouth, partly hidden by a straggling moustache—a face with a pathetic beauty of its own, and the pure light shining on it of absolute self-negation. He seemed to breathe with difficulty, and stooped as he walked, but his astonishing patience with his donkey—a particular obstinate specimen of his race—was what struck one most on first meeting him. The most humane lover of animals could hardly have refrained from using a

stick on this tiresome beast, which seemed almost consciously malevolent in doing things to aggravate. But when his master turned his head and looked one in the eyes, one understood.

We asked him where he was bound, and it came as rather a shock when he answered with a Yankee accent —like a stonecutter's saw—

"I'm gwine to Mount Olivet."

"Can we help you in any way?" we asked.

"Deeply grateful, gentlemen, but I can get along all right," he answered. Then, after a moment, he added—

"I wur a teuth doctor, and, like many of them, a man of evil ways, but I've been converted and have took to the Gospel business."

And he lifted his battered old hat, as in reverent memory of the solemn event.

"But why come here?" we asked him.

"Guess it's as good a jumping-off place as any other," he replied, without the least levity.

We asked him to join our party, and he jogged along on foot, we finding him a very original and interesting companion, but he left us in the Valley of Hinnom, for he said he usually slept outside the walls of Jerusalem. I saw him again, two or three days after, on the Mount of Olives. He was squatting on the ground with his Bible open, on his knees, and a few ragged Jerusalem loafers hanging about him, to whom he was expounding the Scripture in American English. His boots were off, and he had doffed his frock-coat; by his side were the contents of his sacks; the small kettle, and so forth. His donkey was tethered to an olive-tree close by, and some one had brought the beast some dried grass. I asked him what he was doing, and he replied he was teaching the Gospel.

"But surely they cannot understand a word you are saying?" I asked.

"Strikes me that ain't of no consequence," he answered. "Surely this ain't a tougher job than Pentecost, and He done that all right."

I thought it would be irreverent, or worse still, hurt his feelings, to say that, judging by the faces of his listeners, the process was not going on rapidly; for he seemed absolutely convinced that he was letting light in on their minds, and—absurd as it all was—there was something pathetic in this wonderful faith, which had lost all sense of proportion. I asked him where he slept.

"Right here," he said. "I guess this is as handy a fox's hole as I can find lying around: and what was good enough for my Master is good enough for me."

He never slept in a house, ate nothing but bread, onions and fruit, and, of course, only drank water. He had been about three months in this "business," having arrived at Jaffa with four or five thousand dollars, of which he had given away nearly every cent to the poor. But every one in Jerusalem—the clergy, without exception—thought him a fool and lunatic. And so he was, in one way, to think that the life of Christ is possible in the nineteenth century anywhere, more especially in the country where He lived and died.

For if there is a spot on earth where His lessons are absolutely set at naught and His example derided, surely it is in His own city; the very centre of rancorous religious hatred—the very hotbed of ecclesiastical fraud and imposture.

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Palestine travelling, forty years ago, was far more pleasant than it is now, for the few people one met were almost entirely English, with a smattering of well-bred Italians, French, or a stray American. Nowadays every

hole and corner of this land swarms with tourists from all parts of the world, prominent amongst them and far outnumbering them all put together, the Germans, who have, as everywhere else, rendered life miserable for other nationalities. For your travelling German seems to think the whole world is his private apartment—to behave in with what decency he is capable of—indecorously uxorious if newly married, or working his miserable wife like a bootblack if the honeymoon is over.

It is thus, that being almost always a small shopkeeper, he is the pestilence that travelleth by noonday, for in Germany, as yet, there is no cultured middle class, and you pass, at one leap, from the refined, courteous German aristocrat, amongst the best in Europe, to a social level which has no parallel in other European countries. This shopkeeper pervades everything. Under the silent cypresses of Scutari Cemetery his little table and mug of beer stand ready for him: the Holy Sepulchre reeks with the miasma of his woollen underwear and pestiferous Hamburg cigars. In a railway carriage he stifles you by closing every window; taking off his boots preparatory to sleeping under a pile of rugs enough to smother a crocodile. He eats three times more than any other European, and is, in consequence, certain to snore in a train, or to be sick in a steamer, even in dead-smooth water. Finally he believes himself destined to over-run and rule the world, not only in commercial enterprise, but in military achievement.

I parted company with my companion in Jerusalem, as I was obliged to cut my journey short for want of cash, and rode down to Jaffa in company with a man who had come out to write a book on the Holy Land, which was to surpass everything hitherto attempted. To leave his mind unbiassed, he had purposely refrained from reading anything any one had ever written on the subject, with

the exception of such historians as Moses, Samuel, Daniel and Zephaniah. He took everything literally, and when we came to a big grove of myrtles—near Mizpah—begged me to look out for a "man on a red horse followed by three more red horses speckled with white." He said the most disagreeable thing he had experienced in his journey were the owls at Jericho—they kept him awake half the night. I said I had not noticed them—and that if I had I rather liked their ghostly noise.

"Well, you must 'ave a taste—you must," he said. "I just 'ated them, and I'll read out to you what I've put in my book about them. 'Sleep was banished, for a troop of jackals rendered night 'ideous with their melancholy 'owls.'"

At first I thought him a fool, but changed my mind later; for he drank all my brandy and borrowed two sovereigns, which he forgot to repay; besides getting on board the steamer without having paid for his horse from Jerusalem, pretending to have a fit, which rendered him unconscious until we were well out to sea. On reaching Alexandria he had another fit, which lasted until after dark, when he so far recovered as to be able to crawl out of the port of the steamer into a coal lighter and get ashore; incidentally taking with him two pairs of boots and a pair of trousers belonging to the man who had shared his cabin, and without having paid for his ticket. I lost sight of him then, and am sorry; for he was an interesting person, with many idiosyncrasies, and likely to get on. From Alexandria I got a passage home in a merchant steamer, which carried a few passengers. We were a very mixed lot in the saloon, amongst us an Indian Chaplain, his wife, and two sickly little girls; the father, a white-livered person in spectacles, with every particle of energy burnt out of him in some deadly Plain Station; the mother, with a thin, solemn face and a voice like

a hen. She was fervidly pious and extremely captious, and before we were out of sight of the lighthouse had endeavoured to enlist my services in an attempt she intended to make to reform the morals of two French women—also passengers—connected with the stage. The battery was to open fire by my presenting these ladies with two tracts, one narrating some incidents in the life of Mary Magdalene and another about Rahab, the inn-keeper of Jericho. I was to translate these *vivâ voce*, and then the Chaplain's wife would appear on the scene and plant the seed on this prepared soil. But it never came off; for this good woman, coming on deck one evening rather late, actually tumbled over the feet of an old rascal, a second-class passenger with no right to be on the poop, on whose knees was seated one of the damsels we were to reform; whilst a little farther off the other was peacefully reclining on the lap of the chief engineer. Although she had been to India in a P. and O. steamer, the good woman was considerably shocked, and came and consulted me about it in the morning. I said there seemed something in sea air which made people behave in unaccountable ways on board ship, and that perhaps it would be best for us not to begin just yet, but to wait further developments; which, indeed, developed with such rapidity that, on arriving at Malta, the French Consul came on board and, at the captain's request, both ladies were removed to the shore, with much shaking of fists and violent language, in which "Ces Maudits Anglais!" and "Canailles!" were often repeated.

In Malta we embarked a man who looked as if Death had already placed his hand on his shoulder; for he was greenish-white, bending forward, and evidently in great pain. I told the captain that I thought the man was in for cholera. He laughed at the idea; he knew when he saw cholera, and so forth. In a few hours we were at

sea again, and the man was evidently dying, with all the unmistakable symptoms of that fell disease. The skipper asked me what ought to be done; for no one would go near the sick man, as he lay in his cabin in agony. I went down to look at him, he was already becoming unconscious: almost in a state of collapse, his knees drawn up, and a cold sweat all over him. There was nothing could be done for him, but I gave him about a hundred drops of chlorodyne, which, however, I might as well have poured out of the port, for it went there almost immediately. By morning he was dead; I had hardly left him all night. The captain came down and put his hand on him. "Why, he is still warm," said he; "surely he ain't dead—is he?"

"Yes, he is," I said, "and he will be warmer still, unless I am mistaken."

For I had seen temperature rise after death in cholera. And so it did with him, but there was not a shadow of doubt he was dead.

All day long the skipper and I went in and out of the cabin where he lay, in order that the passengers might not know that he had gone. Nevertheless a nameless horror was plainly showing itself on board, both they and the crew guessing something had happened. After nightfall the skipper and I sewed him up in canvas, and with the aid of the Mate, carried him on deck. As we stumbled up the companion, the Chaplain looked out of his cabin, saw what was going on, and immediately dodged in again and banged-to the door. I thought he would have come out to read the Burial Service; but as he did not offer to do so, we did not ask him. So there we stood, we three, the mate holding a lantern whilst I read out the last sentences of the Burial Service as used at sea; and then the splash.

We then went down and collected all the clothes the

man had worn, as well as the sheets, blankets, towels, carpet, curtains, cushions, washing utensils, in fact everything movable in the cabin, rolling them all up in bundles and throwing them overboard. Next day the terror had deepened, most of the passengers refusing to touch fruit or fish, many remaining in their cabins all day with the door shut; whilst amongst the most invisible was the parson, who, with his wife and children all jammed-up in one cabin, we could hear groaning out prayers all day long.

In the Bay of Biscay, in a heavy south-west gale, we almost ran into a raft, constructed of heavy timbers, and had it been night we should probably have struck it, and, I cannot doubt, should have stove in our bows and foundered. A barrel was still lashed to a mast that had been broken off five or six feet above the planks, which had been well nailed down to the timbers, and lying between the mast and the barrel, with a lashing round her waist, was the body of a woman in a light cotton dress; one arm with a broad gold bracelet, her shoulder bare where the bodice had been torn away; her feet and ankles without covering. It was a terrible sight, for with every plunge of the raft, now carried to the crest of a green-grey roller, now plunging down into the seething foam, the corpse dashed itself about; the arm flung up as if imploring help, the head tossing from side to side, the long hair washing backwards and forwards over the white face. We were quite unable to board the raft; for, even if the sea had been less violent, the steamer's boats—which had hung rotting at the davits for years—would not have floated in a duck-pond. A well-found man-of-war's boat could have done it, however, and some one with a line round him would have got on to the raft, and at least given rest to that sad sea-tossed form. But the skipper absolutely declined to

make any attempt, and so, after slowing down and examining the raft as closely as possible, we stood on, leaving the mystery unsolved. But sufficient evidence to throw some light on the history of the raft was in its construction. We knew that it had been put together out of spars from a steamer; for there were none in it that could have belonged to a sailing ship. There had been ample time, too, to make it well, showing that the ship from which it came had either foundered slowly in fine weather, or may have been burnt. The ropes and lashings had not been long in the water, and no doubt the other occupants of the raft had been washed away, for if the woman had died before their rescue her body would certainly have been cut adrift and the bracelet taken away. I have seen many terrible sights: massacres in Bulgaria, the horrible death-pits of Las Palmas, the Canton River with its floating dead after a typhoon, Chinese pirates beheaded, a man crucified in Japan, with other nameless horrors, but nothing has left a sadder impression on my mind than this poor woman, tossing frantically on the wild waters of the Bay of Biscay—to wake on the sea-less shore.

I watched the raft for a long time, and then went down into the saloon. Three men were playing cards: two of them hopelessly trying to cheat the third—a Maltese Jew. The Chaplain put his head out of his cabin—the first time he had been seen since the death of the man by cholera—and, calling the steward, abused him roundly, because a can of water had upset in his cabin through his own stupidity. The chief engineer, already half-seas over, was drinking whisky and water, in the proportion of three of the former to one of the latter, whilst narrating a long yarn of doubtful tendency to a blowsy widow, who regaled herself with occasional sips out of his tumbler.

Truly a microcosm! this rusty, rotten, old iron box,

ploughing over the ocean, trusting to Providence, bearing this strange agglomeration of human beings.

We reached Liverpool without further incidents, and, there being no doctor to report how the man had died, there were no delays in allowing us to land.

And so closed another stage in my life.

CHAPTER XVII

EMIGRATION

A glimpse of London Society: smart and otherwise—Discovery of Archangels in our family—Queen Victoria's Court: no sailors need apply—A spiritualistic cheat—A challenge—Childish sequel—Engaged to be married—Emigration—More steamer experiences—Near foundering—Ravensworth once more.

MY father and mother being as usual domiciled abroad, I remained in London as long as my money lasted, which, however, was not long, though long enough to give me a glimpse of a life—hitherto unknown to me—of Fashion, of Politics, of crowded ball-rooms, of a Court where a confectioner's son, in the Household Cavalry, was of more esteem than a British Admiral, of men who lived on cards and billiard cues, of ladies who accepted diamonds or bonnets, of parsons of the lap-dog variety, of swell tailors who lent money.

Fresh as I was from scenes not entirely flat or devoid of adventure, I found, however, that I was nowhere with any young man who knew all about the theatres, the matrimonial and other *liaisons* of Society, or could talk its shibboleths. Nor did my own family connection help me much towards this useful knowledge, for those in it who were clever had higher occupations, and the others had, all more or less, got religion in some acute form: my Uncles Robert and George Gambier—both Admirals—

both prematurely Archangels in the Irvingite Church, and so on. The people I saw most of were my father's cousins, Monckton Milnes (Houghton), Lord Galway—a genuine sportsman of the old school—the Sumners, Morant Gales, Pyms, Chattertons, Murdochs, Noels, Marshams and others, all kinsmen. These—with the exception of Monckton Milnes, who knew every one from prince to scene-shifter and was equally popular with all—formed a clique in London Society where to be up in the aforesaid *coulisse* lore was not considered essential. For it had not become the fashion to marry actresses, nor had the *noveaux riches* as yet bought their footing, whilst though, of course, the Society Phryne and Aspasia existed, it had not become customary to introduce them to one's wife or sister, who were then neither curious about them nor discussed them.

I have alluded to the fact that Naval men, and indeed the Navy itself, were held in very little respect in those days. The Prince Consort hated the sight of the sea—where he was always deadly sick—and everything in connection with it, and, though himself dead at this time, from his newly-made grave his hand could still exert its maleficent influence. The profession of the Navy conferred no social rank or advantage as did that of the Army in the Germanised Court of Queen Victoria where naval men were rarely seen, and, in which, not a single naval man held any appointment. Of course, one or two Court favourites were stuffed into good billets, maugre that they were sailors: or supposed to be.

My money being spent I went to Dieppe to stay with my father until I should get a ship. They were still occupying the old house on the Quai Henri IV.

A Chaplain had come to the place, who had been bear-leader to the Prince Consort's idiot brother, but many of the old clique had vanished or had been submerged.

Home, the spiritualist, and his sister, with Mrs. Milner Gibson and others, had formed a spiritualistic *coterie*, into which my mother had been engulfed, many *séances* being held in our haunted old house, which seemed to lend itself to the imposture.

It is difficult to understand why my father did not kick Home out of the house at once, for there never breathed a greater charlatan; the whole thing ridiculous, transparent fraud, resting merely on Home's word, a hopelessly rotten security. For instance, in a pitch-dark room, making us all sit down, and having bound us by promise not to move, he would turn up the light in a minute or two and point out that a heavy china vase had changed its place from the chimney-piece to the top of the piano, whilst he himself was supposed to have sat still holding a lady's hand all the time, who must naturally have been a dupe or a liar.

Of course, all the other varieties of spiritual manifestations went on—table-rapping: table-turning: planchette; but Home did not stop at that. He had dark *séances* where he persuaded my poor mother that she was in communication with my sister who was supposed to have been massacred in Cawnpore, and with my brother who had fallen at Delhi, the lying rascal pretending he had never even heard their names or anything about this incident in our family history, whereas, it turned out, that Mrs. Milner Gibson had told him everything about it, down to the most minute particulars. But when taxed with this by my father, he had the audacity to deny that Mrs. Milner Gibson had ever said a word about it, giving her the lie direct. And still all his devotees continued to believe in him and none more vehemently than Mrs. Milner Gibson herself. Then an old French Marquise, a friend of ours, disappeared and her son rushed off to ask Home to inquire of the spirits

where she was to be found. Home, who was in our house when the news reached us, immediately closed his eyes and began to jabber some nonsense, finally declaring that the old lady was in the water, by which he distinctly referred to the Port. Great was the excitement—for she was a kind of leader of sections in Dieppe—the police were put on the alert, and people began running up and down the quays, shouting for their mothers or the Virgin Mary, if a fish splashed, or if a gas-bubble from the town sewers burst in the water. Then a policeman, more practical and perhaps bolder than the rest, determined to search the house of the missing lady, which by this time was empty, every one having scattered in the quest. In and out of every room and attic, finally the minion of the law came on the door of a little-used room; burst it open, and beheld the old lady sitting in a big tub of tepid water sound asleep. She had been missing for about four hours, and it was supposed that the unusual effect of her body coming in contact with water had produced a state of semi-coma. The news quickly spread, and Home was at once accredited with having learnt through the spirits that the old lady was *in water*, and was more than ever believed in.

But, however one may laugh at the absurdity of such frauds, their evil effects are undeniable, for my mother and my two sisters verily believed that hypernatural occurrences took place in our house, and an uncomfortable feeling seemed to settle on us all, from which even my father, my brothers, and myself did not entirely escape, whilst some of our friends reached a state of hysteria bordering on insanity.

One amongst these was the widow of a well-known man holding an office in the House of Commons. At one of these *séances* this lady suddenly sprang from her chair on to the top of a table—a large, massive piece of furniture

which three men could scarcely lift; which, however, had been gyrating about the room in a ridiculous manner—and in a moment this very decorous person began to dance like a Mænad, kicking up her heels, flinging her arms about, whilst showering, on all and sundry, winks and gestures appropriate only to a *café-chantant*. Amazed and shocked, the other women seized hold of her feet, and begged her to return to the floor. But, no! on she went until, *nolens volens*, she was hustled off by the outraged spectators. When she had recovered breath she was begged to explain, but before she had had time to do so the table began to rap a long message to this effect—

"It is your husband who is present. He loved the ballet and you have given him the greatest delight possible."

This was rather a revelation for the widow, for she had never known that her husband had this predilection. On the contrary, every one knew that in piety and all godliness he was hard to beat. So, whilst she was still in the room, the other people all agreed that this was a "bad" spirit and a liar; though, as soon as she was gone away, opinion began to veer round: that, after all, it must have been more or less true, though the spirit had no right to give Mr. —— away. This frightened a good many of Home's disciples and many abandoned the circle. For no one could tell what might happen next.

This was an extremely happy period in our lives, and we had many friends, Elmhirsts, Rawnsleys, Capels-Reads, Hacketts, and many others. Amongst them was another very charming old French Marquise, who, the winter following, had to have her feet amputated—having got them frost-bitten in the snow in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris—and died. Another French friend of ours—who had only heard the story of her death imperfectly—thought she had lost her feet through putting them in water.

"Que voulez vous!" he exclaimed. "Elle avait cette mauvaise habitude Anglaise de se laver les pieds."

I came very near being engaged in a duel about this time, my one and only venture in that line all my life. I was dancing with my sister—at the *Établissement*—and we had stopped to rest. A young Frenchman—on a chair just behind us—put out both his feet and encircled my sister's ankle. She told me of it and I followed him outside after the dance was over, caught him by the neck and boxed his ears soundly. He would doubtless have run off and said nothing had not some of his friends insisted on his calling me out. Men are often like that. So next day two French officers brought me his challenge and I selected broadswords as weapons, my two friends laying down stringent regulations that there should be no child's play. Late that night a very great man, one of the first Dukes of the French Empire, called on my father and begged him to intervene. My father, who knew nothing about the affair, sent for me and I told the Duke the whole story. He said he was ashamed that his son had behaved so like a blackguard, and that instead of his resenting my having boxed his ears he only wished I had given him a sound thrashing, and, that though he was his only son, he would kick him out of his house unless he made us the most ample apology. I said that I did not in the least want his apology, and, as far as I was concerned, the Duke could do as he liked. He left, pressing my hand most cordially.

"It would have killed his mother," he said, as he went away.

An hour after, the youth came to the house and apologised, and that was the end of it.

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But high above such matters as I have just related, Kismet was preparing for me for a meeting of far-

reaching consequence. We casually made the acquaintance of an American family: mother and two daughters, of the true stock of the F.F.V.'s, who, like many thousands of Southerners, had been reduced to absolute poverty by the war. To the youngest daughter I became engaged in a short time, and cast about in my mind by what process I could secure the home she was willing to share. My thoughts turned on Australia, for I had seen how pleasant life could be in the bush, its freedom and plenty: its vast possibilities. For my friends the Russells were amongst hundreds who had begun squatting with barely a farthing. Why should not I succeed? and even if I did not realise their great fortunes, still we might live well and be happy. She, too, with American belief in a young man "getting on" saw no difficulty about it. We would wait a year or two and see how things went. Something would be sure to turn up; that fond hope of all who love young. It is true every friend I had, including my father, tried to dissuade me from the enterprise, but they argued against the most potent instinct in the whole range of human nature. I think little of man or woman who does not believe in the dish of herbs.

As chance would have it, at this particular conjunction of affairs Willie Russell, the head of the Ravensworth family, happened to be home from Australia, and did not dissuade me from trying my hand at squatting, although he knew from experience that the bush teemed with well-bred failures. But he also knew that the majority of these men had been failures in everything else before trying Australia, which he thought I was not, as I had already done well at sea: the best training in the world for any man. He gave me a most cordial invitation to go to Ravensworth and stay there whilst I looked about and gained "Colonial experience." Unconsciously, though, I began buying this experience in London before starting,

for, like many another greenhorn, I was persuaded by an ignorant impostor of a saddler in the Strand to invest in a thing he was pleased to call an Australian saddle, and much similar gear, not one single item of which was of the least use when I got to real work in the bush.

I managed to scrape together a little money, chiefly by borrowing, thus, at the outset, placing a loadstone round my neck, which for many years after was a burdensome reminder of my failure, taking me years of close sailing to the wind to get clear of.

As we had a very good interest at the Admiralty I got a year's leave, thus fortunately securing a way of escape if things went wrong abroad, though I thought this an unnecessary precaution, feeling confident that I should never again tread the cobble-stones of Whitehall to look up a Lord of the Admiralty.

I rushed over to Paris to say goodbye. My American friends were in a small *pension* in the Rue du Colysée, No. 8, and were practically living on the charity of a very noble-minded American millionaire, Mr. Corcoran, who, I believe, kept half the American colony of Southerners going all through the war. I found a well-known French historian hanging about the eldest girl, and instinctively mistrusted him. He was a plausible, sneaking, conceited humbug and brought great sorrow into that family. I also heard of an extremely wealthy German banker, of Jewish extraction, as paying great attention to the younger, my *fiancée*. But I thought nothing of it, and left again with as light a heart as the prospect of this temporary separation would permit. Could I have foreseen the future I should have stopped in Paris, called out both men and have tried to kill them.

I had taken my passage for Sydney in the steamship *Otago*, but had not given myself the trouble to go and inspect her before doing so, or I think that, with

a reasonable predilection for a vessel that might be expected to float, I should have thought twice about going to sea in her. When I saw her lying alongside the quay in the London Docks it struck me that she was as low down in the water as anything I had ever seen, and yet they were still stowing away cargo and taking in iron rails. We were to have sailed that day, but apparently the desire to test how much she really could carry without foundering had prevailed, and next morning when I went to embark they were still at it. On the quay some of my fellow passengers had assembled, and I was surprised to see amongst them three or four unmistakable military men, whom I afterwards discovered were on their way to join their regiments in New Zealand. One of these was Major Clements, of the 68th Regiment, the late popular Secretary of Ascot Racecourse, and another, a not less popular man in the Army, by name Covey, in the same regiment.

This was very gratifying to me, as I had looked forward to some fifty or sixty days of pacing up and down the deck with some man in the "soft-goods line," or in "hats," which would have been very trying.

I got on board, and found my cabin—a very small one in the waist of the ship—where the scuttles could scarcely be kept open in harbour: a serious matter when one reflects that chance may give one for a companion in it a seasick man, or one not given to washing. I had not long to wait, however, to see who I was to have with me, for I had hardly taken possession of the upper berth when a clean-shaven individual—very like Buckstone, the actor—in very shabby clothes, appeared at the door bearing a fiddle case in one hand and a mangy-looking carpet bag in the other, the saloon steward bringing up the rear with a broad palmetto hat and a bottle of whisky. We at once entered into conversation and

I saw that as far as amusement was concerned he was likely to turn out satisfactory, though as to his washing it struck me he would leave much to be desired.

The ship cast off and steamed out into the stream; a bright morning, with mist lying over the Pool, St. Paul's Cathedral looming up vast and shadowy, the cross catching the morning light, to remind one that there was hope even for the struggling Babylon below. Then the Tower, the *Dreadnought*, and Greenwich Hospital, with its memories of a monarch's mistress, and on past the broad, flat shores until the Nore is reached, and I thought of the time when my grandfather, Admiral Money, then a Lieutenant, helped to hang the men who had broken out in the celebrated mutiny, bringing their country into great peril.

From such reveries as these I was awakened by a woman's voice remarking to me in broad Scotch that we had made a "Gey guid stairt," and, on turning round, found the speaker to be a strong-built, red-haired young woman of four-and-twenty or so—evidently already quite at home on board—with a silk handkerchief tied over her head. She struck me at once as being perfectly straightforward, and that she was evidently bent on being agreeable. After a few minutes' talk she informed me that she had come round from Aberdeen in the ship, that the captain was her brother, and that she was going out to keep her sister-in-law company, who was also on board, and at this particular time "not strong." We rapidly became friends and, having been joined by her brother and his wife, I found myself in genial company and was given the run of their private cabin. The skipper was the counterpart of his sister, except that he was considerably shorter, but he made up for his want of height by an astonishing breadth of back and chest, and a neck like a bull. His name was Smith, and the young woman's

Christian name, Maggie. At dinner time, as we were still in smooth water, I obtained a view of the rest of our passengers, amongst whom my cabin mate—Corby by name—had already established a considerable degree of sociability, thanks to his jovial manner, which left no one out in the cold. Outside the river we dropped into a stiff north-easter, going down Channel over fourteen knots, with the square sail set forward, and in a few days were well across the Bay of Biscay, and shaping our course for St. Vincent in the Cape de Verde Islands. Here we coaled, and then stood on for Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope. We were only a few hours at the Cape, but when about to get under way a row broke out amongst the crew, *à propos* of what I never ascertained. Led by a blustering ruffian, who had already been insolent in his manner all the way out, nearly the whole crew had mutinied, barricading themselves under the forecastle, and refusing to weigh the anchor. The chief officer, a peaceful, careworn mariner, went forward to remonstrate, but the only point he could make out in their grievance was the end of a marling-spike, which came whizzing out of the dark and knocked him down. Then the second officer went to the rescue and two or three shots were fired, the first intimation that we in the saloon had of the row, which brought us all tumbling up on deck, preceded by the skipper, and followed by the gallant Maggie. As soon as the second officer explained what was going on we held a council of war, standing under the shelter of the deck-house for fear of raking shots coming aft. Some advised one thing, some another, most of the passengers, except Clements, Covey, and myself, retiring to their cabins, bolting their doors. Finally, Smith decided on a general assault of the barricade, and, followed by us, and a quarter-master, who had remained faithful, rushed forward, on

one side of the deck. Then, before the men under the forecastle had time to act, the skipper sprang over the barricade, and plumping in amongst them, had the ringleader by the throat, and, by main force, hauled him, half strangled, back over the barricade, when the quartermaster slipped a running-bowling over his shoulders and roused him down to a ring-bolt on the deck, whilst the second officer clapped on the handcuffs. The rest of the mutineers showed no fight, and at once obeyed the order to man the boat which took the ringleader ashore, where he was handed over to the authorities.

When the boat returned we weighed and left the harbour. But though the mutiny was quelled the discontent was not allayed, and manifested itself in the form of a dastardly attempt to lose the ship; some scoundrel placing a large sail needle under the compass card—after dark—with the consequence that, as the compass was deflected, the course we were steering was completely out, the danger increased by the extreme darkness of the night, rendering it impossible to distinguish the land, which was within a mile or two. We were as nearly as possible on the rocks, lying to the northward of the Cape of Good Hope, when the error was discovered, the breakers being only a few hundred feet from our bows. No clue to this villainy was ever obtained.

Soon after this we came in for a very heavy gale with a tremendous sea running, the deeply-laden steamer making poor weather of it, shipping seas fore and aft, and with difficulty getting rid of the water. We first tried to run, with a reefed foresail, but the sea curled over the stern in one broad mass, once reaching the man at the wheel, who was, however, caught by the legs by Clements just as he was going over the side. Then the skipper made up his mind to lie to, but this

was very ticklish work as the bulwarks were already stove in on one side. However, the alternative was to risk being pooped: so the foresail came in and the staysails were got ready, and, watching his chance, he brought the ship steadily to the wind which—as we came up to it—roared like thunder through a narrow gorge, causing the steamer literally to stagger. It was one of the wildest nights I have ever seen, with a sea running of which no one who has not been on the Agulhas Bank off Cape of Good Hope can form an idea. As there was nothing else to be done I went below and turned in "all standing." But about midnight the ship broached to, when a gigantic wave, with a roar like an earthquake, broke over the bows and swept aft in one solid mass of water. Everything on the upper deck was swept away, the skipper and the mate standing on the bridge for a moment or two actually losing sight of the vessel underneath them. When the water rolled off, a boat and part of the deck-house had vanished. In my cabin I heard absolutely tons of water pouring down the companion—as the door had been wrenched off—and, springing out of bed saw a broad waterfall coming down from above, and to find at least a foot of water round my ankles. In the saloon, under the light of the violently swinging lamp, the passengers were huddled together, most of them in their night dresses, some of the women screaming and hanging on to the back of the long seat as best they could, in water over their knees, whilst a poor cripple girl was rolling about on the deck unable to rise, drenched to the skin, her hair all over her face. I lifted her up and put her into her berth in the cabin. "Are we going down?" she asked calmly. "Tell me the truth." "I don't think so," I answered; "but I will come to you if there is any danger."

"God's will be done," she said. "Life isn't very sweet to me."

I left her, knowing very well that if the ship filled there was no chance for any one and that she might as well stay where she was. And the same idea had evidently occurred to the fiddler, for, going to my cabin for my coat, I found he had climbed up into my berth, being the upper one, and there lay, philosophically waiting what might be in store for him, but none the less hugging his beloved fiddle and the remains of a bottle of whisky.

"What's up, mate!" he said, "bad weather? Ship going down?"

"Looks pretty bad," I answered.

"Well, I may as well stay here," said he. "It's no good spoiling my fiddle before it's necessary."

So we had two philosophers on board, with two points of view.

I then went on deck, getting there with difficulty, where, clinging on to what remained of the deck-house, I found Maggie, barefooted, in a long cotton wrapper.

"Where's your sister?" I bawled in her ear, though even that she hardly heard above the din: increased vastly by the roar of steam escaping up the steam pipe.

"I have tucked her in tight, I am afraid she is dying. I'm trying to get on the bridge to tell Jim," she screamed back.

"Go below again, and I will tell him," said I, and crawling forward and up the bridge ladder at the risk of my life as the bulwarks were gone, I told the skipper what Maggie had said.

"Can't help it," he said, with his face hard set, his hands clasping the rail, "I've got my duty to do here, and we must get some sail on her." Which was true

enough: for it was touch and go: the waist full of water, the fires put out, and the ship in the trough of the sea, completely out of control. To think of the boats was useless, no boat could have lived five minutes in such a sea, even if they could have been lowered, which would have taken a long time. Everything was pitch dark, all lights extinguished except that one lamp in the saloon, and we could see no one forward. So, leaving the mate on the bridge, the skipper and I crawled forward and roused some of the men out of the forecastle, who thought, like the fiddler, that they might as well stay where they were. With great risk of being washed overboard, we managed to get the fore staysail set and so got her before the wind, and out of the trough of the sea, when the immediate peril seemed over. I wanted Smith to go below for a minute, but still he said he could not leave his post—so I then went below again and found that Clements and Covey had succeeded in allaying the alarm of the passengers, as much by their coolness as by anything they could tell them. Most of the women had returned to their berths, but some of the men were still hanging on to the seats, and the steward was trying to get things ship-shape—no easy matter. Maggie appeared at the door of the skipper's cabin—she was quite calm—but her unfortunate sister-in-law was in hysterics: calling piteously for her husband.

It was a night of terrible suspense, for there was now a cross sea running up against the wind, and at any moment we might have broached to again. But it was not to be, and by next morning we had run out of the worst of it, and the fires were once more lighted. The skipper's wife had survived the terrors of the night, and my little cripple friend appeared none the worse.

We reached Sydney in due time with no further

adventures, beyond a desperate fray—between a "soft-goods man" and another gentleman, who informed us he was "travelling in oil"—in which a considerable portion of the oily one's beard remained in "soft-goods'" hands. They did their fighting lying on the deck of the saloon, sometimes one, sometimes the other being under, using teeth and nails indifferently, and were so desperately in earnest that they were only separated by the steward capsizing a bucket of water over them, after the method adopted with cats.

* * * * *

I found Sydney greatly improved since I had left it, and even in that short time many of my old friends had gone, some dead, some married: outsiders now insiders the very Kernel of Society, whilst some of the original Kernel had blossomed into Knighthood. However, I did not remain in Sydney longer than I could help, and after looking up a few old friends took my passage in a steamer bound for Newcastle, N.S.W., the nearest port of disembarkation for Ravensworth, the Russell's Station. But I went to say goodbye to my little friend the cripple and found her, strange to say, staying with some old friends of mine of New Zealand days—the Raymonds—who had come to settle in Sydney.

I spent my last evening with these kind people, and can well remember that the views I heard expressed as to the chances of a young man getting on in the bush without capital were rather a damper.

"You would do much better in New Zealand," they said.

And I believe they were right.

CHAPTER XVIII

RAVENSWORTH

Stern realities of bush life—No glamour remains—True types of bush "hand"—Bushrangers and cattle thieves—Highway robbery and murder—Chased—Cross a stream in flood—Lost in the bush—Starvation—A creeping horror—Mustering cattle—A brave woman and a black snake.

I LEFT next morning for Newcastle, but already with some mysterious foreboding of failure hanging over me. I felt that I was now no longer a mere looker-on in the life-struggle which I saw on all sides, but that I had come into it to take my own part. In my turn I was to try what fortune could do for a poor man: but I believed in personal endeavour and the recognition of it by Providence. I did not know Providence.

Arrived in Newcastle I took the train to Singleton, from which the Russell's Station was distant about fourteen miles. I deposited what little money I had in a local bank, and then went to an inn, where a buggy was waiting for me from Ravensworth. The large deal case containing my bush "outfit" was left to come in the next dray that came in for stores. It would have mattered little had it never come, for before I had been a week on the station I had been laughed out of the whole thing, and had had to buy an old second-hand bush saddle, my own being as useless to a stockman as a crinoline to a blue-

jacket. At this inn another instance occurred of psychic recognition—perfectly inexplicable on any hypothesis either of memory or resemblance. On leaving Ashley Lodge for the railway station I was driven by an old cabman, by name Fowles, whom we frequently employed. A son of his—whom I had never seen—had gone out to Australia many years before this. When I got out of the cab, old Fowles—who knew where I was going—said to me, "If you see my son Tom in Australia, ask him to write home and tell us how he's getting on." I explained that Australia was a big country, and asked him if he had any idea of the name of the place his son had gone to. He had none. I forgot all about it until an exceptionally ragged ostler brought out the Ravensworth buggy for me, when suddenly something persuaded me it was old Fowles' son. I felt absolutely sure of it, so I said—

"Your name is Fowles, isn't it?"

He looked amazed, and seemed to think I had some special reason for asking him, and he seemed at first disinclined to answer. But I pressed him and said—

"Your father—the Cheltenham cabdriver—asked me to look you up."

He then admitted he was the man, and I said—

"Then why don't you write home?"

* * * * *

I need not repeat my impressions of ordinary bush scenery in Australia. Maturer experience and knowledge of other lands only confirmed my original view—that—with scarcely an exception—no country is uglier and more uninteresting. Of course, there are some parts of Australia which do not come into this category, and there are scenes of great beauty, such as the Blue Mountains, but the average of the country is an unending monotony of barren, undulating land, with trees growing at considerable distances apart, their dull, grey bark

peeling off and hanging in ribbons over their whitening stem: or else plains of scorched, coarse grass, with patches of dense scrub marking the site of creek or gully, with its bed dry and stony one hour, and the next a roaring stream after some rain.

Though the house at Ravensworth had in no way altered since the jolly days I had spent there as a midshipman, I instinctively felt that the soul of it had fled, and I cannot describe how lonely I felt when I looked round the familiar scene. It was not that I feared to contend with the difficulties which must beset a youngster settling down to a bush life—for my training at sea had been rough enough—and I knew I should take to bush life with great pleasure, thoroughly enjoying the excitement of mustering cattle or horses, and the stirring scenes of a stockyard, for all that had not altered. But when the day was over and I returned to the solitude of the verandah and looked across the eternal vista of plain and scattered gum-trees, whilst the sun went down and the black vault overhead twinkled with stars, my heart seemed to sink within me with a desperate sense of loneliness.

For already that first day had begun to be one of disillusion—there was not a particle of cordiality or friendship in the greeting of any one, whilst as to the overseer himself—to whom Willie Russell had written personally commending me—he never came near me, or took the slightest notice of me for hours, though hanging about the whole day within a few yards of the house. Moreover, when he did come and I looked in his face and listened to his brogue, I instinctively felt there would be no sympathy between us—an instinct absolutely correct and painfully verified: for we had not one single thought, desire, or custom in common. At sight of him the last shred of glamour of the place vanished, and day by day I

began to realise my isolation. I was known to be poor—dependent, as it were, on the hospitality of the Russells, and, in the eyes of the overseer and of the station hands, had no right to come and go as I liked, or to be living in the big house. I became, no doubt, resentful, and I certainly hated the whole crew. The fact was, the "hands" on Ravensworth were true types of stockmen, and not those of fiction—that glorified personage of the Australian novelist. If he exists I did not come across him, for the men I had to associate with were the lowest scum of society: idle, drunken hooligans, with minds as debauched as their habits were filthy. The leading "hand"—a half-caste—was a magnificent horseman, and soon after became a notorious bushranger: the others were loafers, born and bred, and many of them sheep-stealers, without a thought but trying to see how little work they could do; living simply to draw their pay and go to the nearest bush grog-shop to get drunk and gamble. Furthermore, the only law amongst them was the law of the fist. It was Cheltenham College over again, and, however much I may believe in schoolboys fighting, it becomes irksome later on in life, and hurts more. I believe I have always been able to adapt myself to the ways of any decent men I have been thrown amongst, whether English or French, Arabs, Chinaman or Japper, but these "hands" at Ravensworth were impossible. True, I was getting "Colonial experience," but it was an experience a young man would be better without.

Gradually I began to grasp the whole question of settling in the bush, and recognised in very early days that the life of a struggling beginner—however much he himself might come to like it—was in every conceivable way unsuited to a woman nurtured in the indolent luxury of a Virginian home in the palmiest days of slavery. To transplant to these rough scenes such an exotic—on

whom even the wind had never blown harshly—whose feet, like those of most Southern American women in pre-Abolition days, had rarely walked a mile; whose hands had never tied her own shoe-strings was impossible; and I began to realise the utter futility of my venture. I had left home with that incentive for which most men work hardest, and lured by the phantom of a fortune to be made in a short time, or buoyed up with illusive hope of falling on my feet. I ignorantly supposed that honest, willing men must be at a premium in Australia: but, alas! I found persons so equipped wandering about everywhere, many in actual search of food.

Life at Ravensworth differed in no degree from bush life in general, and as that has often been described, I need say nothing about it here. The times themselves, however, were productive of some incidents which are worth recording—as a picture of an epoch already passing into the limbo of the forgotten—namely, adventures and alarms from bushrangers. There was an epidemic of bushranging at this time in our part with horrid barbarities, which had produced that kind of panic not unknown in a suburban district in England after a few cases of housebreaking. A gang of ruffians infested our neighbourhood, keeping us constantly on the alert at night, and our eyes well open as we rode about by day. Within a mile or two of our house several people had been "stuck up," the Colonial expression for being robbed with or without violence, and without prejudice to murder if necessary. The mail coach had been stopped and passengers plundered, and—as in our stage-coaching days—a dozen able-bodied men, most of them with pistols *in their pockets*, had surrendered at discretion to one or two highwaymen. In these encounters it was not uncommon for the robbers to meet their old masters, and

treat them as they thought they deserved. A squatter, living within a few miles of us—who had frequently bragged about what he would do if he met any of the gang—was stopped by a single individual; made to dismount, stripped naked, and then, tied to the tail of the bushranger's horse, was led within about a hundred yards of his own door, and there loosened; the thief trotting off quietly with both horses, plus the man's clothes, watch, and money. Another point of resemblance between the bushranger and the highwayman of romance was that the lower class befriended and sheltered him, and, indeed, his numbers were largely recruited from small farmers and other people who were ostensibly living respectable lives. This made it very difficult for the authorities to suppress them, as they were always kept informed of the movements of the mounted police by their friends, or, if hard pressed, could lay aside the revolver and bowie knife for the bucolic stockwhip. The climax of their impudence, on the Hunter River, was reached by three or four of them riding into a considerable town, overawing the police, robbing the bank and standing treat, at one of the largest public-houses, to all and sundry who chose to drink, paying honestly for all the liquor: and then riding off quietly and unmolested.

Beyond stealing some horses at Ravensworth, I do not think they committed any depredations, though I myself had a narrow escape. I had ridden into Singleton and had put my horse up at the inn. Fowles, the ostler, told me confidentially that he had heard there were "men" on the road between Singleton and our place, and advised me not to go alone. But the Hunter River, which lay between Ravensworth and the town, was in flood, and I knew that if I did not cross it soon I might be detained for days. So I determined to chance it, and towards evening, my horse being thoroughly fresh, I rode out of

the town and found that I had not been wrong about the river, as it was now a raging stream of several hundred yards wide; in a few hours to be unfordable. It was a dark night, but I crossed in safety, and purposely rode on the grass under the trees to deaden the sound of the horse's hoofs. About five or six miles from Ravensworth the road became extremely dark, when, passing through a thick clump of trees, my ears—which like those of most short-sighted people are abnormally sharp—caught the sound of a faint whistle some way ahead of me, which was repeated almost immediately on my right and, in a moment, behind me also. I did not stop long to think, as the whistler on my right was evidently within a few hundred yards of me, so turning my horse sharp to the left I struck into the bush. Quicker than it takes me to tell I heard the sound of horses' hoofs both behind me as well as on the road over which I had just travelled. Then I let my horse go. Fortunately for me he was very nearly a thoroughbred, and though not very suited for ordinary bush work, was a grand goer.[1] I did not feel a moment's anxiety as to his speed, but I did as to my own eyesight, for I was afraid I might ride into some impassable gully, where my pursuers would be able to close on me. For nearly a mile I let my horse go as he liked, and still I heard the hoofs behind me, but as they were clearly not gaining I began to pull him in a little, for he had already travelled some twenty-six miles with me that day, and I wanted to keep him fresh. But I found that the sound of the hoofs grew almost immediately plainer, so I determined to ride as straight as I could to a station belonging to some people called Glennie, which lay somewhere ahead of me. Another mile brought me to a hut on their station, close by which was a stockyard, and I hoped to

[1] I have heard that he subsequently won the Melbourne Cup, but cannot say if it is true. His name was Seducer.

find some of their stockmen there, but the hut seemed quite empty and I could not stop to look in. Another half mile and I had to cross a deep gully; which, however, I thought I should have no difficulty in doing as I had often crossed it before. But as I galloped down the sloping bank fringed with wood, I saw the shimmer of a broad stream in front of me where I had expected to find only a few yards of knee-deep water. I knew all the dangers of trying to cross a stream in flood; the swirl of water, the uprooted trees borne along with tangled weeds trailing after them, and, above all, the difficulty of finding a landing-place. There was, however, no alternative, so, sticking my spurs into my horse, I rammed him into the water. He went completely under and nearly turned over, but he righted and then tried to swim back to the bank we had left. Fortunately, however, I managed to turn his head down stream again, and rolling together in the water we swept down in the dark, a distance which to me seemed never-ending. Then the horse gradually edged himself towards the other bank, felt the ground under his feet, stumbled over some drift wood, and, at last, with a great effort got up on to the bank, where he stood still, shivering. I jumped off and led him up higher, and then listened. Far off, on the other side, I heard the sound of horses going down the stream. None of my pursuers had followed me across the gully; or perhaps they thought I had not ventured it myself, and was still on their side. I mounted and rode on, and striking the track leading to the station, in a short time saw its lights. I got in safely, and was, of course, made welcome.

A day or two after this a man was shot where I first fell in with these rascals, and I have no doubt it was done by their gang, one of whom, as ill-conditioned a scoundrel as ever walked, only a few weeks previously had been

employed as a rough-rider at Ravensworth. Some months later he departed this life in the gaol at Sydney with a rope round his neck, and "split" on his "pals": which broke up the gang on that part of the Hunter River. I have always believed that I was indebted for this adventure to one of our station hands.

To be lost in the bush was my next experience, and though I had looked Death in the face many times before, and frequently since, I never felt such a disinclination to come nearer to him as I did then. I had gone out with the stockmen to bring in cattle from a distant part of the station, but had to return to the head station for a horse, my second animal having fallen with me coming down a steep hill, spraining his fetlock. I felt no doubt I could find my way back alone, and this I succeeded in doing, for, acting on the advice of the stockmen, I left it a good deal to the horse. I got to the station late in the evening, having ridden close on sixty miles—under me, one of the most wonderful horses I had ever seen—a roan, called Badger—who on a previous occasion had carried me close on a hundred and ten miles in twenty-four hours. As I owed my life on this occasion to this animal's marvellous endurance and intelligence, I will briefly describe him. He stood about fifteen hands, had a coarse, Roman-nosed head, an eye full of fire: shoulder perfect in form: a neck like a bull's: short, flat legs, cow-kneed: his body abnormally long, his back hollow, his quarters of immense strength, with the girth of a drayhorse. He seemed to have some specialised breathing apparatus in lieu of lungs, for he could gallop—fairly fast—for hours, up hill, down hill, over rock, stones, dead timber, and heavy grass. In fact, I never saw the man he could not tire out. His skill in collecting cattle was equal to anything human; he would wait for the charge of a bull or an infuriated cow—much the more dangerous of the two—and

then step aside with all the coolness of a great matador. He was perfectly quiet and good-tempered. His reputation spread far and wide, and, in consequence, he was stolen out of our paddock and was ridden for a long time by a celebrated bushranger called Wingey, who was captured and hanged; when old Badger came back to Ravensworth.

But to return to my story. Early next morning, having got a second horse and some food for the day, I started off to find our camp. But by midday, having eaten my food, I found I had lost all trace of the track, and that I began to recognise nothing. I rode on and on; climbed some hills I had never seen before, and towards dusk gave it up as a bad job for that night, for I had been riding, off and on, for over eleven hours, leading my other horse by a halter, which was tiring work. So I hobbled the horses, off-saddled, and lit a big fire. It was a brilliant night and the country lay spread out below me in primæval silence, save every now and then for the distant wolf-like bark of a dingo. With my saddle under my head I was soon asleep, and slept soundly until the morning, when I awoke desperately hungry. I caught both the horses, saddled up, and began to cast about where to go next. I reasoned with myself that it was best to find my way back to the head station rather than plunge further into unknown regions; but, above all, it was necessary to reach water, so I followed down the first gully I could find.

This I did for a few hours, but began to think I must be on the western watershed, and thus travelling away from the station instead of towards it. So I resolved to try and find my old track, and return to Ravensworth on it, and, knowing that, in a general way, the camp where we had pitched our quarters bore about north-west from the head station, I tried to ride south-east now. This,

as long as the sun was low, was easy enough, but as it got vertical it was by no means easy to keep on the bearing, and I had no watch on me—the best compass in the world when you know its use. I was beginning to feel tired for want of food and water, but still rambled on through the same eternal scrub and open patches, the same everlasting gum-trees, shrivelling in the blazing sun, and looking like mangy olives.

On and on, on and on, the led horse frequently going one side of a tree, myself the other, necessitating turning my horse and getting him in line again—wearisome when every ounce of strength seems ebbing away. I had now got down into what seemed an interminable plain, thinly wooded and almost bare of grass, the heat, as the day drew on, seeming to take on a visible tremulous reality, the leaves of the trees hanging down apparently dead; not a sound anywhere except the footfall of the two horses. When the sun was in its meridian I got off and lay down under the thickest tree I could find. Overhead I heard a scraping noise and wondered what it was, and, looking up, caught the bright, round eye of an opossum scratching his claws in the gum-tree. How I thirsted for his blood! But I had no means of either catching or killing him. I lay so still he almost touched me, as he came down and skipped off to another tree, and I was sorry when he went: at least he was some kind of companion. But what roused me from a stupor into which I was undoubtedly falling was a pungent aromatic smell, which I had not before noticed, growing stronger and stronger as some unfelt wave of air brought it to my nostrils. I sat up wondering what it could be and looking about saw, a few yards off, an advancing column of the red soldier ant of the bush. I instantly got on my feet, with a feeling of horror, for I remembered the dead bar-keeper of Canoona and the sight of a dead man's

bones, picked as white as snow, which I had once seen somewhere else. I knew, too, that these ravenous insects do not wait for the death of their prey, for I had seen them swarming over an unfortunate cow, lying with her back broken, at the bottom of a gully, her mouth, eyes, nostrils, full of the all-pervading horror. I saw myself in the same plight, overmastered by millions of these scourges, my eyes pierced by their terrible jaws and my breath choked. And doubtless it was a providential discovery in time; for had I fallen asleep I see no reason for doubting I should have been attacked. I braced myself up: any death was better than this, even a black snake would be infinitely preferable: with an end in five minutes.

I moved off and stood thinking and then had an inspiration. Why not leave it to Badger? I called to him, he was cropping the scanty grass a few yards away, the led horse tied to his girths. The animals came up, and I verily believe old Badger understood, for there was a look in his eyes of almost human sympathy as he rubbed his forehead on my chest. I crawled up on his honest back: lay the reins on his neck and signed to him to move on: talk I could not. To my surprise he turned off exactly in the opposite direction from whence we had come, heading again north. But I let him go, he was an extraordinarily quick walker, the led horse having frequently to break into a slow trot. He got back to the hills, up one, as steep as the side of a house, down a long valley, turning sharp to the east at the bottom of it, and it was impossible not to see he knew where he was going. But night came on again, and he slackened his pace and began to look about him, and I thought he knew he was at fault or could not be sure of his track in the dark. So I got off him, hobbled him and tied the led horse to a tree with as long a halter as I could. I think Badger was

never twenty yards away from me all that night; remaining close at hand, like a loving dog, and quietly cropping what grass he could get. I spent a night of great pain, my vitals seeming drawn together, and I chewed grass and buckled my belt as tight as it would go. I think I must have been nearly mad, for every imaginable horror crossed my mind and all the events that brought me to this pass rose up before me like voices in the night. But, strange to say, I slept again, and in the morning actually felt fresher. My hand was very painful from holding the halter, but I thought nothing of it, and unhobbling old Badger I managed to get on his back and again gave him his head. We had completely changed places. But the other horse had got loose and I could see him nowhere. This did not greatly affect me, though during the night I had several times thought I might try and kill him and eat his flesh. But I dismissed the idea as too brutal, and I thought I saw in his disappearance that an escape from such cruelty had been sent. However, we had not travelled a mile before the poor beast came whinnying up to us, rubbed his nose on old Badger's and looked into my face. How little the faithful creature knew the murderous thought I had been harbouring against him! I caught the halter and he dropped contentedly alongside: and silent and dejected we three jogged on. But I believe it was my confidence in Badger's instinct to find either water or the way home, that supported me all through the next terrible and trying day. I need not attempt to describe the pangs I was suffering: thirst and hunger have been too often portrayed to make anything one could say new. I was simply dead-beat, my brain growing cloudy, and I knew I was sinking into indifference, and I can hardly remember anything, until, towards evening, I saw a curl of smoke, a long way off, but still unmistakable, and my spirits rose.

I tried to urge on my good, old horse and he responded. I was in terror now lest I should fail to reach to where the smoke lay or lose sight of it in the fast falling gloom. As to what it might be—white man's camp or black's resting-place—I cared nothing, though the latter might very possibly have ended in a spear or knob-stick. For any fate was better than death by starvation, and I pushed on. It is impossible to describe my joy when, in the fast darkening night, I saw the white gleam of a long line of fence, and heard the bark of some clever dog collecting sheep; a far sweeter sound to me than would have been the voice of an archangel singing all the Pæans of Heaven. Following the fence I soon came to a shepherd's hut, a woman standing at the door, a small child clinging to her skirts. She made no sign of welcome, but stood gazing fixedly at me—I learnt afterwards she thought I was a bushranger—and I could not speak for the dryness of my swollen throat. As I rode up I pointed to my mouth and the truth dawned on her, for she came and helped me off my horse—for I could hardly move—and brought me milk, and, later, some food. My troubles were over.

Soon after this her husband came in: he was not one of the Russell's men; indeed, I was forty or fifty miles away from Ravensworth, but only about five from a station I had once before visited riding Badger. My belief is he was making for the place all the time, though, as far as I know, he had never approached it from the direction we had come. As I lay in some dried grass in the shed that night I began to realise how very nearly the shadow of death had fallen on me, and felt certain that my life had been preserved by some occult intelligence possessed by my horse quite beyond human cognition.

It is only a philosopher or a fool who believes he can reduce all mental processes to systematised reason, or

that, with animals, it is only hereditary instinct. The marvellous organ of locality of Australian bushmen, and of Australian blacks, is certainly possessed by bush-bred horses and cattle in a still higher degree, for men make use of the heavenly bodies to find their way, but it is ridiculous to picture to oneself a horse or cow looking up into the heavens for Altair or the Southern Cross, or examining the stem of trees to observe on which side the sun beats. There is more unexplainable wisdom in a bee than in a beadle: in a bug than in a County Councillor.

I slept until nearly ten next day, and, beyond feeling great pain in my hand—which had been cut almost to the bone by the halter without my having been aware of it—I felt all right, and started off for Ravensworth, the shepherd accompanying me until I could recognise the lay of the land. Being well provisioned, I took it easy, following the dried bed of a stream in which there were frequent water holes, and spent that night in the bush, lighting my fire, warming up my tea and again sleeping the sleep of the righteous. Next day I reached the head station. I had been missing nearly five days, but my return excited no comment, for they supposed I was still at the muster; and I myself said nothing about my adventure. I rode into the paddock, turned the horses loose, and next morning, whilst it was still dark, getting some provisions from the storekeeper, started again for the camp, which I found, more by good luck than anything else, on the evening of the next day. Here my arrival excited no interest either, most of them thinking I had done what all of them would have liked to do: gone off to lie low in some bush grog-shop.

We spent many days in these hills mustering cattle, and I know no sport to equal it. The hardest run after foxhounds is mere child's play to driving several hundred

head of half-maddened cattle through a country that nothing but a bush-bred horse could get over. Only those who have seen what bush horses can do can understand it, whilst an Australian stockman, as horseman, is as far ahead of the much vaunted American cowboy as the said cowboy is better than a British stockbroker. Mustering horses is faster work than cattle, it is true, but there is not the constant peril of the charge of a frenzied bull or cow, which, swerving suddenly out of the flying herd, comes at you with a blind rush. All then depends on a quick eye, a nimble horse, and a habit of keeping your saddle, when your horse plunges sideways or whirls himself round—like a leaf in a squall.

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There was only one man on the station for whom I had any regard—an under-overseer, by name Greenwood, a small, patient person with very great knowledge of sheep farming and of Colonial business generally. With him I went to look at a station that was for sale about thirty miles away from Ravensworth, with some half-formed idea in my mind of getting possession of it and of working it with him. But the plan fell through. Mrs. Greenwood was a very remarkable woman, of great personal courage, and alone amongst many other women—situated like herself in out-of-the-way places in the bush—remained with her husband all through the bushranging panic. She must also have been a woman of great presence of mind, as the following anecdote will illustrate. One night she jumped out of bed to run to a crying child, when she put her foot down on what she instantly knew must be a snake, and, by the shape of it, that her foot was close to its head. Had she drawn back she would have been instantly bitten, but she threw all her weight on her one foot and nearly crushed the life out of it. But the reptile had wound its hinder coils up round her leg and had squeezed

it so tight she could scarcely move. Her husband was out and there was no one to help her, but she managed to unwind the coils, and then sprang aside. She got a match and lighted her candle and saw an unusually large black snake—the most poisonous reptile in the world—with its neck almost crushed flat, wriggling on the floor. She got a hatchet and chopped its head off. It must certainly have been death to her in a few minutes if she had shown less coolness.

CHAPTER XIX

DISILLUSION

Goodbye to the bush—Indecision—Leave it to chance—Ship for England—Incidents of voyage home—Personal combat with a villainous Jew—Queer doings—Appointed to Channel Fleet—Admiral Blether, K.C.B., &c., &c.—Heroic hogwash—Fenians—Attempt to capture the Head Centre—An Irish wedding—Southend: *al fresco* bathing—Mr. Gladstone—Lord Houghton.

THE unhappy word with which I have headed this chapter describes completely the frame of mind into which I was drifting. Not that I disliked the life in the bush—in fact it appealed to me in a thousand ways, and I should have been content to embrace it as my own under different circumstances. The wideness of the life and the extraordinary sense of freedom which grows on all Australians suited my temperament in every way.

But the time had come when I had seriously to consider my position. I had scarcely any money left. Though living practically at free quarters, still there were some outgoings, and I must decide. Then, too, there was the home question, and the conviction that the scheme had failed. The alternative was plain—return to the Navy and take my chance, or burn my boats behind and remain.

I spent days and nights in hopeless indecision, but one day something occurred which showed me it would be

impossible for me to stay any longer at Ravensworth, where life had literally become intolerable.

So—that very night—I packed up my few goods and chattels: which done, I went down into the paddock to say goodbye to my dear, old Badger, trusting that he would recognise my form in the dark. For I would not call him for fear of disturbing the hands and bringing them out. I put my arms round old Badger and my face on his neck: I was longing for sympathy from something, which I verily believe the noble creature understood, for when I left him he followed me across the paddock, laying his head on my shoulder after I had climbed the rails, and had turned to give him a last pat.

Getting back to the silent house I sat down on the verandah; I would not lie down for fear of sleeping too long into next day. Below me the widespread bush seemed to slumber, overhead shone the everlasting stars: almost at my feet a mound of earth, with rank vegetation growing over it, covered a dead nigger, whose shade was supposed to haunt the neglected garden. I wondered if I was any better off than him: envying him that he was beyond the necessity of forming a decision. With early dawn I went and found the storekeeper and asked him what I owed him for some trifling little things, such as boxes of matches, a stirrup leather, &c., all of which I paid. I then sent him to ask the overseer if I might have a tumble-down buggy, with which we used to intercept the mail-cart on its way to Singleton, which favour, for a wonder, he granted, doubtless as thankful to be rid of me as I was to leave him. I carried out my traps and put them into the buggy, leaving nothing behind me but a large pile of burnt letters and a note of goodbye to Greenwood.

I looked round for the last time, and could scarcely credit that it was the same spot where, some years before,

I had been so happy and light-hearted. All my dreams had vanished, and nothing but sordid brutality seemed to brood over the place. I literally shook its dust off my feet as I climbed into the buggy beside my luggage, for on no spot of earth—and in none since—had I been so unhappy.

Arrived at the point where the coach passed, I stood on the road waiting for it, with a feeling of dejection it is difficult to imagine. My funds were rapidly running out, as I said before, and I had barely enough money to reach Sydney and pay my passage home, if I decided to return to England. But why go back? What had I done to alter things at home? Should I not return ten times worse than I had started? For then, at least, I only owed my long-suffering tailor some £20 or £30, and had not another debt in the world. But if I returned, what was I to say in Paris? I should be obliged to go to sea again immediately, and there eke out of my Lieutenant's pay of £180 a year the means to pay off my loan. I was in a painful state of vacillation through the complication of affairs at home, and at last resolved to leave it to fate. On the road where I stood was a small bush grog-shop, and the coaches pulled up here to refresh the ever-thirsty bush traveller. At this spot the up-country and down-country coaches met, and I resolved that I would get into which ever came in first, leaving it to destiny to settle. Looking down the long, straight track over which the up-country coach must come, I saw a cloud of dust, and well can I remember the curious sensation I had that I was about to turn my back on England—and Paris—perhaps for ever. But in the other direction a belt of scrub hid the view, the road making a sharp turn. And then, almost simultaneously, I heard a loud crack of a whip and round this corner, at full gallop, came the down coach, pulling up at the shanty not three minutes before the other. I felt like a man reprieved, for my heart was really set on

going home, and I jumped up into the down coach with a great sense of relief.

A bush coach was a queer kind of thing, more resembling a box on wheels than anything else, and almost always driven at a gallop. It required considerable skill to retain one's seat as it bounded in and out of large holes axle-deep with dust in dry weather, quagmires in wet, whilst the jolting nearly shook one's teeth out. This violent exercise and the good natured chaff of a fat Roman priest, who shared my wooden seat, and whose knees were continually prodding into the back of an Irish maid servant who sat in front of him, did me a world of good. Before long I had shaken off that accursed feeling which had haunted me almost up to then, a feeling of blind hatred for everything and everybody at Ravensworth, and my depression of spirits gave way to something almost approaching to jollity. Hope dawned again, for hitherto it has never deserted me in anything, and I pray God it never may. Without it, what is life or what is there beyond? To the man who loses hope there are only two things left—a keeper or a coffin.

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On reaching Sydney I looked about immediately for a homeward-bound ship, trying to find a berth on board any kind of craft to work my passage home, but unsuccessfully. I was handicapped by my short sight, and, as I could not walk a yard without my eyeglass, of course no one would have me for a deck hand. So, seeing there was no alternative but to pay my passage home, I went to Melbourne and took a passage in the *Wellesley*, one of Green & Wigram's ships, a comfortable, frigate-built liner, and commanded by another Smith, who, like my friend of the steamer *Otago*, was an excellent seaman. I was too late to secure a cabin to myself, and found I was paired off with a lumbering, greasy German Jew, who I

hated the moment I cast eyes on him: a man of six feet, with shoulders like a soda-water bottle and a face too red and white for a decent person, his eyes leering and cunning. Amongst Jews, perhaps, he was considered a handsome man, to me he was simply revolting, and, knowing the type, I shuddered to think I should be cooped up with him in a small cabin for a hundred or a hundred and twenty days. I discovered, too, that he had provided himself with nothing in the shape of bed linen, towels, soap, sponge, or any other requisite for the journey—things not supplied by the shipowners in those days—and this presented to my mind a real peril. For the idea of this frowsy Israelite using mine filled me with disgust: and I foresaw trouble.

The *Wellesley* was a fine sea boat, as I quickly saw, for on clearing the Heads of Port Philip we at once tumbled into a heavy sea in Bass's Straits, with a strong westerly gale astern, which sent us bowling along thirteen knots an hour, shaping our course to pass to the southward of New Zealand on the great circle for Cape Horn. As most of the passengers were dead sick, including my Jew, who lay in his berth with a pea-green face, I saw little of them for two or three days. But I found Captain Smith an agreeable companion, and we rapidly became friendly. In a few days, as the passengers began to crawl about again, I saw that we were not likely to be dull for want of amusement of the ship-board order, for freedom was markedly present in their manners. Almost at a bound they sorted themselves out into couples for flirtation, the germs breaking up like cells and infecting every one. Amongst them were persons of every kind—except gentry—successful and impoverished squatters, diggers, widows, spinsters, bagmen, retired tradesmen, a bar-saloon keeper, a dentist and his two daughters, and a doctor, who was working his passage home as surgeon of the ship. We all

got on capitally together and—before we were many days out—knew everything about each other; and what we did not know we invented, which did just as well. Almost everybody had a nickname, and all alike were given to a good deal of practical joking, as people of that class often are: always more merry and hearty than their betters, and thinking much less of taking offence. My Jew, however, was of a morose and sullen disposition, and to me personally became an insufferable nuisance. His habits in our cabin were disgusting, and we were continually at variance about having the port open, he dreading cold, I dreading suffocation. Furthermore, I soon knew that he was making free use of my soap and towels, and I used to shiver when I thought what liberty he might take with my sponge, so that every morning, after I had used it, I hung it up in the mizzen rigging, where it remained, safe beyond the clutches of the Israelite, until I went to bed. At this he took umbrage and we had a row, he swearing he had never touched my sponge, I protesting with equal force that some one had altered the position in which I had left it in the cabin. He then invented a method of annoying me by locking himself into our cabin at hours when he knew I wanted to come in, such as just before dinner, and keeping me waiting outside until he chose to open. At last I could stand it no longer, so, one evening—when he had tried it on again and I had knocked in vain—lifting the venetians of the door I obtained a view of him, standing there doing absolutely nothing. I could not stand this, but rattled vehemently and applied some epithet to him, which was not very complimentary.

"What!" he bawled out from the inside. "Insult me like that! This is too mosh. I will break the bones of your body!"

And he unbolted the door and made a rush at me. But I caught him in the left eye, my signet-ring laying

his cheek open, and before he could recover I had hit him about the head half a dozen times, when he fell down and rolled on the deck, where a female passenger, with whom he had made friends, threw herself on his body, seized him in her arms, and began screaming "Murder!" But the Jew was not to be detained, and, breaking violently away from his protectress, who he left sprawling under the saloon table, sped on deck to lay his complaint before the captain. I followed him immediately, and there was a scene: the Jew insisting on the captain confining me to my cabin for assault and battery on the high seas. But I gave Captain Smith my version of the story, pointing out that my enemy had used threats, and that I really only acted in self-defence, and, as I further gave the skipper my word that I would not attempt to evade any legal consequences of the *fracas* if the Jew, on arriving in England, chose to proceed against me, he said he would just leave the matter where it was. And certainly I scored in this affair, for, being persuaded I was in the right, the skipper ordered that the Jew should be transferred to an empty berth in the doctor's cabin, to my unspeakable relief and to the disgust of the Pill. I never heard anything more of the affair, but feel sure that the German thought I was harbouring a determination to thrash him immediately we landed in England, for when we got into the Channel — many weeks after—he hurriedly disembarked in the pilot's boat, accompanied in his flight by his lady friend aforesaid.

This friend of his was an astonishing female, extremely pious, who, before we had been many days out, had organised a Bible-class with prayer-meetings. Needless to say it was short-lived, for not only did the moral atmosphere of the saloon fail to support it, but the foundations on which it rested were rather insecure. For it

was held in the large and airy cabin of another widow, a buxom person of forty, or thereabouts, with a daughter equally buxom and a string of younger children. This person had been a widow for six months, and though she came on board showing all due resignation to the Providence which had removed her husband—a bullying ruffian, according to the children — yet she rapidly developed an aptitude for misconduct and a capacity for drink that was rare even amongst our select selves. In the most barefaced manner she proclaimed herself to be engaged, a few days after leaving Melbourne, to one of the roughest and most rowdy of the second-class passengers—a quondam stockman on her husband's station —who spent hours in the cabin she occupied in common with her daughter, the children being in another.

So, under these circumstances, the Bible-class made little progress, and, one after the other, backsliders were numbered amongst the elect until the pious foundress had to give it up in despair, and had to content herself with isolated religious assaults—generally conducted after nightfall—on solitary individuals. Failing, however, to make much headway, and rapidly desiring to do good to some one, she conceived the bold idea of tackling the German Jew and bringing him to Christianity. But, as by this time we were off the Falkland Islands, in bitter weather, and she had fallen a victim to sciatica, brought on by night mission work, she was compelled to carry on his conversion in her own cabin. There was no stewardess on board, and sciatica is a tiresome thing from which to suffer: so the amiable Israelite was installed as her personal attendant, producing ribald caricature, under the title of "Old Sanctimony suffering from Sciatica," whilst the buxom widow, who had been publicly rebuked by this sufferer for her levity in the matter of the stockman, wrote a tract which she called, "How Sciatica

converted the Jew." Altogether, if we were not well-behaved on board, at least we were not dull, and always had matter for conversation—notably as to the widow's daughter, whose flirtations were simply kaleidoscopic.

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With our arrival in England terminated another cycle in my life, for letters, which went nigh to breaking my heart, awaited me, and I found myself once more in Dieppe, a sadder and much wiser man. *En révanche* I had learnt a good deal, and had certainly had an interesting experience. But my Tom Tiddler's ground had vanished as completely as Atlantis: so I went to my kinsman at the Admiralty, Jem Gambier Noel, and got appointed to a ship in the Channel Fleet.

* * * * *

The Channel Fleet.

My next ship was the *Defence*, then thought a marvel of naval architecture, and one of the first of the ironclads. She is now a coal-hulk. I succeeded Sir Francis Blackwood, and took over his cabin, a spacious apartment in comparison with the small dark cabins of the old wooden vessels. Our Captain was a man who had never kept a Watch, having been promoted from Flag-Lieutenant to Commander without having done a stroke of work that could not have been equally well done by any butler. He had two ideas: his own vast importance and the necessity to make our lives miserable by curtailing every privilege—especially that of wearing plain clothes. He had not the faintest look, or the feeblest instinct of a sailor about him: with a mottled face and red-rimmed eyes, whilst his nostrils were permanently extended by a supercilious sniff.

Our Admiral was, more or less, a jovial soul—but that was about all—with a rolling, sea-faring gait, which,

however, imposed on no one afloat. He was what Bismarck said of Lord Salisbury, "A lath-and-plaster man painted to look like iron." But as a British Admiral he looked every inch his part; a studio Admiral—for the Royal Academy—a man of blood and thunder, to be painted standing on the bridge of a ship going into action with masses of smoke around him, his telescope under his arm, death flashing from his eye, his mouth set and stern. The effect this Admiral produced at the various civic feasts to which we were invited in our progress round the coasts of Great Britain was nothing short of tremendous, infusing a spirit of heroism into the most timorous of aldermen or the least combative of tradesmen. For not only could he look terrible, but he could talk war until men felt they were listening to the boom of distant guns, and could see the flags of England's enemies fluttering down to their poop-rail. As the country had reached the danger-point—by going through one of its periodic phases of truckling to some Foreign Power to such an extent that the nation had begun to disbelieve in the existence of the Navy—this kind of thing was of immense value to the party in power. I forget which, nor does it matter, as they are both tarred with the same brush. As we cruised round seaports people began to pluck up a bit, for here, straight before them, was this superb modern fleet of ironclads, commanded by the most gallant old sea-dog and fighter since Nelson. Heroic hogwash flowed like water—the Admiral requesting his countrymen—like another old blether before him—to sharpen their cutlasses: he undertaking to do the rest. I do not remember, however, that we of the Fleet expressed any burning desire to be led to battle by this warrior; indeed we all felt he was much more in his element at a civic feast.

During her commission the *Defence* had many officers

who rose to distinction, Sir Arthur Wilson, Lord Charles Beresford, Admiral Kane (of *Calliope* fame), Admiral Johnstone, and last, but not least, Lovett Cameron, who did what Stanley never succeeded in doing: pass from shore to shore of the great African Continent, peacefully, truthfully, and unobtrusively with only a walking-stick in his hand and without a stain of blood on it. But, of course, comparison between a British officer doing his duty and a "Special" of the *New York Herald* is absurd. The Admiralty expect a quiet relation of facts: an American newspaper must be fed with blood, bunkum, and lies.

Channel Fleet work, as a rule, is unproductive of much incident, consisting chiefly of much signalling, and fleet manœuvring in fogs and bad weather, alternated with balls, picnics, and garden-parties in port. Thanks, however, to the Fenian scare, the *Defence* was detached from the Fleet and sent to Lough Swilly, in the north of Ireland, where we remained several weeks, but what to do no one knew. As regards myself, however, I attempted in a mild way to contribute towards history by endeavouring to capture Stephens, the Head Centre of the Fenians, who—having escaped from gaol in England—was supposed to be in hiding somewhere north of Londonderry. I heard from a humble source that he was at a little mountain place not far from Moville, a watering-place on Loch Foyle, and, after considerable objection on the part of our Skipper, who seemed to think it an extremely hazardous and foolish thing to attempt, I managed to get forty-eight hours' leave to try my hand at the game which all manner of others were also playing, urged by a reward of £500 offered for the apprehension of the Head Centre. Unfortunately it was several hours before I could get ashore, for the ship lay some considerable distance off; it was

blowing hard and it was night, all of which made procuring a boat difficult. At last, however, Saumarez, our Commander, consented to give me one, and quite late —ten o'clock, it must have been—I found myself on the landing-place, endeavouring to get a jaunting-car to drive to Londonderry. But the little hotel, where we usually hired, had no trap in, and I was directed to a cottage some way out of the village, occupied by a man who was reported to "kape a good baste." Thither I went and knocked and thumped at the door, but could get no response. I thumped again, the only answer a grunt from a pig inside and a horse in a tumble-down shed rattling his chain. I walked round the cottage; not a sign of life; so I waited a few minutes and then banged harder than ever. At last, above the squeaks of the pig, I heard voices—two or three people wrangling in an unknown gibberish—a light was lighted, and finally a window opened, and a face was thrust out which I could not distinguish beyond that it looked young: with red hair. I hurriedly explained that I had been directed to this house by the hotel-keeper, and that I wanted to be driven to Londonderry. The woman made no answer, drew in her head, shut the window, and out went the light inside. This was not encouraging, but I was determined not to be put off so easily, so I banged vigorously once more, when, after renewed altercation inside, I saw the light come again under the door-sill, the door opened slowly, and a man, in trousers and shirt, peep out. His survey seemed to satisfy him, for he then threw it wide open, and behind him stood two women, in night garb, with shawls thrown over their heads. I did not dare tell the man my reason for wishing to go to Londonderry at that hour of night, for I knew he would certainly refuse to be even remotely implicated in this affair. As it was there was suspicion on his

face, with its small boarish eyes, whilst his apology for a nose seemed to sniff danger. For caution was necessary in those days, and men carried their lives in their hands, fearing the vengeance of the "Brotherhood."

"Is it dthrivin' to 'Derry, and at this toime o' night, you're afther?" he said in a surly voice, when I explained what I wanted. "Bedad, it's not me'll bring you."

And a lot more of this kind of jargon, amusing when you are in no hurry, but exasperating when you are. I offered about three times the ordinary fare, and after a deal of consultation with his women, and of haggling for two and sixpence more, we came to terms.

"Come inside. Be aisy, your honor," said the elder woman, and in I went.

The room was about ten feet square: a single bunk stretched across one side: at the other end a mattress, with a pile of grey blankets, lay on the floor: a low door led into the pigstye, and a hen or two roosted by the chimney. The daughter again retired to rest on the bed on the floor, her wonderful hair spread over a dress rolled up as a pillow, whilst the mother, nimbly enough, climbed up into the bunk. Then the man, hastily arraying himself in thick under-woollen things, sallied forth to harness "Ould Tom," an animal whose name had been repeated over and over again in the unintelligible jargon the three talked, leading me at first to suppose it was that of some man who was to drive me. Meanwhile the daughter, from the seclusion of her lowly bed, cross-examined me in every conceivable way. She knew me well enough by sight.

"Wasn't I the gintlemin that bought the blacksmith's colt at Rathmullan; and always had to get on his back inside the stables as no one could mount him onc't out?"

I pleaded guilty to this folly. But beyond answers of

yes or no, she got little out of me, for I knew how unwise it was to give any one the least clue as to what one might be doing in connection with the Fenian Conspiracy.

At last the car was ready, and in a minute after I found myself clinging on tooth and nail to the side of as ramshackle a vehicle as ever ran on wheels, behind a wiry old horse going like the wind, the driver, crouched like a monkey on the front seat, urging him with voice and whip.

Arrived in Londonderry, I went straight to the Superintendent of Constabulary, but here long delay occurred and a vast amount of official dunder-headedness, this officer insisting on knowing where I had obtained my information. But I resolutely declined to say, having given my word that I would on no account divulge it. I lost an hour through this tiresome fooling and only succeeded in getting a constable sent with me with great difficulty. It would have been madness to go alone, for I knew nothing of the country and should have not only run a fair chance of being shot, but could not have trusted any car driver with the secret of my expedition. Finally, however, I found myself once more in a car, *en route* for Moville, accompanied by a sergeant of the Constabulary in plain clothes, and, as dawn broke, we saw Moville, a glimmer of white houses on the dark waters of the loch. We had driven twenty-five miles and had only stopped once—at Mull—where the Constabulary were watching every exit from Ireland. Of course we were not detained: but I saw then how useless it would have been to have attempted to go alone for I should certainly have been delayed, under some pretext, until the Constabulary could have gone ahead to try and secure the reward of £500 for themselves. However, to make a long story short, the whole affair failed, the boat which was to embark Stephens had

left Moville Bay a few hours before we got there, had picked him up on the coast, and—as we eventually learnt—landed him safely in France. I believe official connivance was at the bottom of it: the Government did not want him caught.

So I had my midnight jaunt for nothing and, returning to my ship, I next day hunted up my informant, who was infinitely relieved to hear I had failed, and with good reason, for the Inspector of Constabulary at Letterkenny told me that I was already marked for mixing myself up in this affair.

We had a very good time during our stay in the north of Ireland with much hunting and shooting, thanks to the never-failing hospitality of the Irish gentry, who, in those parts, still retained the typical mode of life which we associate with the idea of their class and country, people who got the utmost out of small incomes, a man with six hundred a year keeping three hunters and a pack of harriers; eating and drinking of the best, content to keep the wind out of his house by pasting paper over broken windows, or by stuffing straw under his hall door. There was a cordiality and simplicity about all these people that I have found nowhere else on the face of the earth: not alone amongst the gentry but amongst the peasants and small farmers.

As an instance of their ingenuous simplicity I may mention that I went to the wedding of a farmer's daughter where I had often been to shoot: the girl as lively as a fawn. The festivities were carried on until late, with much dancing and more whisky. Every one danced with the bride except the bridegroom, who, like many bridegrooms, seemed of no account in the show, and sat peaceably sipping whisky, with a broad smile of complacency on his face, as though conscious that, after all, the wedding could not have come off without him.

The night wore on: twelve, one, still on went the dancing, no one more eager or excited over it than the bride, determined apparently to have one good fling before settling down with her round-faced, loutish husband. But by this time the guests had begun to thin off, and I was on the point of leaving when the bride, with a cloak on, joined me at the door. It was rather a dark night, a great moor stretched before us, the setting moon making a streak of light on the waters of the loch below. An empty car was standing at a small side gate, and I said, without any idea of my proposal being accepted—

"Let's go for a drive, Kathleen, it is such a jolly night?"

But she took me at my word.

"Bedad, we shall! I'm just spoiling for a lark," she answered.

And before I knew what she was doing she was out of the gate and seated in the car where she waved her hand for me to follow.

Ever ready for fun, I obeyed her signal, and in another minute was rattling the horse along the moor road, with the bride, wrapped up in her cloak with the hood over her head, on the other side of the car. We flew along without any very fixed idea of where we were going, but laughing so much we could scarcely retain our seats. We crossed the top of the moor and down through a dark wood, bumped through a stream and up over another moor, turning and twisting about until we reached an old tumble-down shanty neither she nor I had ever seen before.

"Where are we?" I asked, beginning to think we had better turn back.

"I'm sure I don't know," said she.

"We had better get back," I said. "Your husband will be frantic, wondering where you are."

"Faith, not he," she said, laughing. "I left him sound asleep, snoring on father's bed. He won't wake for many an hour."

She turned out to be right: he slept, dead drunk, until next day at noon. So we turned the horse's head towards home, but wandered about until we found ourselves in a big bog and realised that we were hopelessly lost.

She was not the least put out by the situation, and said it was folly to attempt to find our way in the dark. So we got down and sat with our backs against the shed, where she tried to keep awake, but getting drowsy at last went off fast asleep. I put the rugs over her and walked about, to keep myself warm. It began to be daylight before we got home: her mother and a milkmaid just coming in from milking. But nothing was said of our escapade, either by father or mother, whilst the bridegroom, when he awoke, seemed to see the joke better than any one else.

I must pass over the rest of my time in the Channel Fleet, though many things occurred that are now curious history, but space forbids. We paid off in Plymouth in the spring of 1866, and I went down to Shoeburyness, near Southend, to stay for a while with my brother George, the gunner, who had just had a most miraculous escape from the bursting of a large gun, when several men, standing close to him, had been blown to atoms. Southend was then in its infancy and a highly-diverting place. It was chiefly frequented by an East London shop-keeping community, and certainly whatever else these good people did, they came there to amuse themselves and incidentally to amuse us. Their *al fresco* bathing habits reminded me of the islands of the South Pacific, except that there was no sheltering fringe of forest growing close down to the water into which they could retire.

After this I had a spell of a London season and for the first time met Mr. Gladstone, at my cousin, Lord Houghton's. Like every one else who ever came in contact with him, Mr. Gladstone impressed me powerfully by the magnetic attraction of his personality. And yet I can distinctly remember having a certain mistrust of him. He and Lord Houghton were talking over political events, and amongst others the Schleswig-Holstein Question, then prominent, came up. It was absolutely impossible to say whether Mr. Gladstone took the Danish or German side of the matter, and yet one came away with the idea that he had been propounding views of the highest statesmanship. He talked to me about the Navy, but two things struck me; first, that it interested him very little, and secondly, that he could not have known less about it even if he had been First Lord of the Admiralty. It seemed a new conception to him, the naval point of view that there was only one Flag beyond the confines of Europe, namely, the British: as it was in those days. He struck me as more interested in some pettifogging parliamentary ruse to catch votes than in all India or Australia. But I had no experience of politics in those days, or I should not have been surprised; and not the remotest conception of the venom of party.

I went about a good deal amongst political personages, but my abiding impression was that the world was governed by very little wisdom, and, that to stuff some noodle into an Under-Secretaryship, there to qualify for the Cabinet, was of more importance in the eyes of our rulers than the loss of Canada or the Russian advance in Central Asia. Venality, in one form or another, was rife in all public offices, nepotism a disease. A well-known man in the Navy, of a great family, who commanded a line-of-battle ship at Spithead, could only go ashore on

Sunday for fear of the bailiffs. He was made a Lord of the Admiralty, and in two years—having paid off his debts—bought a nice estate in Hampshire.

I cannot state this as a fact, but hundreds of men must be alive who know if it is.

As to the Admiralty it was parlous; a kind of ham-and-beef shop, with the Duke of Somerset, who admittedly knew nothing about the Service, sandwiched in between two slices of Sir John Pakington, who thought he knew everything. These patriots had been preceded by a dreary, drivelling administration under Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax), when the Navy reached its lowest ebb since Queen Elizabeth.

Meanwhile, in spite of the Admiralty, the Navy was, however, steadily improving itself. A new spirit had arisen amongst naval men, and, with the new ships—which the Admiralty were reluctantly compelled to build—the modern Navy, the wonder of the world, was coming into existence. However interesting as is this subject, I have here no opportunity to describe it, and must pass on to such matters as lie more legitimately in the scope of an autobiography.

Moreover, are not these written, &c. . . . &c. . . . ?

CHAPTER XX

ANDAMAN AND COCHIN-CHINA

H.M.S. *Sylvia*—Sail for China and Japan—Shooting excursion in Trincomali—Migrating elephants—Narrow escape from wild boar—Temple of the Thousand Columns—A Dutch Sappho—Andaman Islands—Singapore and a great Chinaman—French Cochin-China—Marvellous adventures with French officers—Tigers and pythons—Tartarin not in it.

IN the autumn I was appointed First Lieutenant of the *Sylvia*, a vessel to be employed in the survey of Japan and China. If I had searched the Navy through—with the exception of the royal yacht—there was nothing I could have wished for more, giving me the chance of seeing two countries I had longed to visit from my boyhood.

The *Sylvia* was as pretty as her name, more resembling a large yacht than a man-of-war, with large deck-houses for chart work, and a broad bridge for taking astronomical and other observations. The Skipper was an amiable little person who gave himself no trouble about anything under the sun—not even his "h's," which he left entirely to look after themselves, popping in and out of his mouth like rabbits in a warren. He was extraordinarily fortunate in his career: beginning as a master's assistant, and being transferred to our line and made Commander very young. The same thing occurred to a brother of his.

They had a powerful patron in an Admiral of high social position, and anything was possible in those days.

To carry on the really serious part of the contemplated survey in China and Japan his first assistant had been carefully selected: a remarkable man of indefatigable energy—Maxwell by name. There were also several other excellent surveyors under him, men who made their mark later on.

The next four years were amongst the most interesting of my life, visiting unknown islands, from the Atlantic to the Pacific: in the Straits of Malacca, the coasts of Indo-China, the marvels of Japan—still in the hands of the Tycoons—the beautiful Island of Formosa, the vast Chinese rivers, the Portuguese gambling-hells of Macao: Hongkong, Canton, Shanghai—all these places explored, with many others too numerous to mention. As to the ship herself, the *Sylvia* was conspicuously unfit for her special work, being a bad sailer and worse steamer, cramped for space, and her decks lumbered up with useless guns. It was the old system, which may go on still, for all I know, the hydrographer imploring the Lords of the Admiralty for a ship, the Lords grudgingly consenting to give him half a ship, the other half to be reserved to the fighting Navy, with the result that neither conditions were, or ever could be, satisfactorily fulfilled. Any business man sending out a costly scientific expedition would employ a steamer with plenty of room for everything, and no nonsensical attempt at combining fighting and science. But I need not dilate on this purely professional topic. It is an old-standing evil in the Service, generally productive of much friction between the Officer in command of the Survey and the Admiral on the Station, the first wanting to be left alone, the last wanting to interfere, or ordering him to do regular Service work. Fortunately, however, for us, our Admiral, in China, for a considerable

time, was the late "dear old Harry"—Sir Henry Keppel—a man ever kind and judicious, always ready to help any one, if it could be done without encroaching on the interests of his own relations or personal friends. Harry Stephenson, who had always been a great friend of mine, and has remained so—nephew of the Admiral—was his Flag-Lieutenant. He was a most popular man amongst us, with many of the qualities of his uncle—extremely pleasant manners and genuine *bonhomie*. He has since risen to great distinction: become one of the King's personal friends, commanded the Channel Fleet, and is now Black Rod.

* * * * *

After encountering the usual gales of wind in the Channel—without which I never remember to have left the shores of England—we reached Madeira, under sail, and standing in to the anchorage with every hope of a run ashore, were hailed by the health officer to the effect that we should have to pass five days in quarantine.

"Sir," roared the black-faced Portuguee, standing up in the stern of his boat, "you cannot *pratique* haff for fife days!"

A brief consultation between the Skipper, Maxwell, and myself, and then the order, "Hard a starboard! Man the lee braces!"

And in a minute we are heading for the open sea; whilst slowly the lofty peaks of this exquisite island sink below the western horizon.

We next touched at the Island of St. Vincent, in the Cape Verd group, the very antipodes of Madeira in regard to vegetation. For the north-east trades blow so continuously and furiously that not a tree or shrub can live in the island: a dreary Inferno of black volcanic mountains and of blistering valleys of sand and scoria; its inhabitants a multiple cross of Portuguese and West

African niggers, for ever grimed in coal dust—their sole occupation coaling ships.

Simons Bay, Cape of Good Hope, was our next stopping-place, and here we were once more in clover, I myself looking up many old friends of bygone days. From there on to Ceylon, an island of fascinating beauty, with its endless variety of trees and shrubs, with forests still teeming with large game.

At Trincomali I had a very pleasant excursion in quest of these last : a new experience for me, and not unproductive of adventure. I engaged a Shikari, recommended to me as a skilful hunter, and, in a native boat, crossed to a little-frequented place in the north-east corner of the bay. We pitched our camp on the side of one of those wonderful tanks whose remains are to be seen throughout Ceylon —stupendous monuments of the industry of bygone ages—twenty or thirty miles in circumference, with stone embankments broad enough on the top for a bullock cart. I had no great luck in finding game, beyond a shot at an elephant, which I must have missed, two or three deer, which I did not, and several hours spent on the track of a panther, which we, however, never overhauled.

In the night there was weird mystery about the jungle that impressed one most forcibly. It was not safe to go far away from one's camp fire, for wild animals were evidently afoot. Then a vast noise—which sent my beaters scampering up trees until the sound died away —was made by a migrating herd of elephants. Though only a sound, the sense of the weight of this moving mass was overpowering—whilst the jungle men, creeping back, spent the rest of the night muttering and jabbering amongst themselves. The Shikari—who spoke a little English, and was extremely intelligent in making himself understood by signs and pantomime when words failed, crouching in the attitudes of different animals and

imitating their cries—told me that at certain times of the year elephants congregate in large herds and migrate to some distant part of the jungle, taking a perfectly straight line, from which nothing can turn them. He said he had often found wild animals that had been trampled to death in their track—bears, hyænas, leopards, and huge snakes—all of them either caught in their sleep or, hearing the noise of the approaching rush, becoming terror-stricken and unable to move. He also said that he had often seen a particular bull elephant, heading a herd like the one we supposed had passed that night, and that he had a name known through all North Ceylon: that his (the hunter's) father and grandfather had seen him all their lives, and knew him to be more than a hundred years old, whilst many said he was between two and three hundred. Some years previously this great beast with a large herd had charged through the Shikari's own village, leaving scarcely a hut standing, when numbers of people had been crushed to death in the rush.

Next day I had a curious adventure. A large herd of boar had taken possession of a clearing in the jungle, looking for roots in the soft earth, which had been pounded and trampled by the migrating elephants. There must have been fifty or sixty boar roaming about, searching for food, and the Shikari told me that many animals follow in the wake of a rush of elephants, not only root eaters, but beasts of prey, with vultures and other birds, hoping to find something to suit their tastes. I determined to try and get one of these boar, and, making a detour to get to leeward of them, I crawled into the clearing—hiding behind any tufts of long grass that had been left standing—and reaching the fallen trunk of a large tree, discovered, to my delight, that there was a fine large boar within a few yards of my hiding-place.

I was so close to him that I could see every bristle on his huge body, and, to my heated imagination, he looked as big as the Boar of Calydon, with an immense head, long tusks, and a fiery red eye. I was not particularly well equipped for big-game shooting, as I had only an ordinary double-barrelled 12-bore gun, with a bullet in one barrel and slug in the other, but I felt sure I could secure the animal, so near was I to him. He had not heard a sound, or scented me, and I took careful aim behind his fore leg and fired. But he must have caught sight of me, for that same instant he wheeled round apparently unwounded and charged, making straight for my log, on which he literally had his fore feet—his terrible tusks almost touching me—when I fired the second barrel right into his open red jaws, blowing off half his muzzle and stopping him dead short. He did not utter a sound, but lay there stone dead. I sprang to my feet, and, being ignorant of the ways of wild pigs, did not know whether I should be attacked by the rest of the herd or not; so I loaded as rapidly as I could. But I need not have felt alarm, for almost before the echoes of the shots had died out in the jungle, there was not a vestige of a pig to be seen, the entire herd vanishing as completely as if the earth had swallowed them, though squealing and snorting lasted for some minutes. I then examined my game, and was astonished at his size. His body was covered with a kind of close woolly hair, out of which bristles protruded, and enormous tusks curled up over his jaw. My first shot had struck him in the flank, showing me that he had whisked round at the moment I fired, and I attribute to this the fact that he only got his fore feet up on the log and had not strength enough to lift his hindquarters. Whatever it was, I had had a very narrow escape.

Next day we shifted camp, taking up our quarters under a vast banyan, in the upper branches of which

were hundreds of flying foxes—old Australian friends of mine. But I left them in peace, for beyond their smell, which is not pleasant, they are harmless creatures, though I have seen the poor things show desperate fight when wounded. We next visited a great morass frequented by buffalo, but were unfortunate in this quest, for there were none: but I shot a very large crocodile, which was accused, by my Shikari, of having quite recently carried off and eaten a woman who had fallen asleep on her way to her village which lay the other side of the water. I have heard of entire villages being depopulated by a single monster of this kind, and the Shikari told me that he himself knew a place where six or seven persons, chiefly women and children, had disappeared in a very short time, through the ravages of these terrible Saurians.

Trincomali is one of the finest harbours in the world, and of great sacred interest to the Hindus. At one time the magnificent Temple of the Thousand Columns stood on the Saami Rock, a great crag rising three or four hundred feet sheer out of the sea. For centuries before Buddha it was a holy Brahmin shrine, but in time the Buddhists built a shrine here to Siva. Those peaceful colonists, the Portuguese, destroyed this great fane sometime in the seventeenth century. But it is some satisfaction to know that a righteous judgment overtook these bloodthirsty pirates, for their fate in Ceylon was terrible. The spot is still held in extreme veneration by the natives, and an annual pilgrimage, not only from Ceylon but from all parts of the Buddhist world, is made here at a certain time of the year. One of the columns of the temple is always inspected by Europeans. It stands on the very top of the rock, and bears an inscription in memory of an unhappy Dutch girl, Francina Van Reede, who, like a second Sappho, flung herself into the

sea in despair when she saw her faithless lover sailing away in a vessel for Europe. I forget the date; but it was somewhere in the seventeenth century, after the Dutch had kicked out the Portuguese.

From Ceylon we went to Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands, a convict establishment for our Indian possessions, where, with the usual sentimentality of England, the criminals were better off and happier than they had ever been before, pampered, overfed, and assigned the lightest of tasks: living in comfortable detached huts with their wives—or what passed for them—and their children, with goats, fowls, in fact in luxury and freedom: except that they could not leave the island. A few years after (1872) one of these amiable assassins murdered Lord Mayo, the Viceroy of India, in this same Port Blair. We visited many of this queer group of islands, endeavouring to land on one where the crew of a merchant ship (the *Assam Valley*) had been murdered, and some said eaten, though it is doubtful if the Andamanese are really cannibals. All we saw was a white man's boot and a boat's painter lying on the beach, and these we could not reach as the surf was too heavy to make landing practicable. In the fringe of forest, separated from the sea by a strip of thirty or forty feet of sand, groups of entirely naked savages were to be seen; short, black and extremely shiny, their hair partly shaved and sticking up in frizzled tufts, their faces, which we could plainly distinguish with glasses, seemingly of the lowest type of human beings. None of the men were more than five feet high and the women about the same. All the men carried very large bows and the women sheaves of arrows.

As we could do nothing, and the solitary boot afforded no real evidence against them, we refrained from firing on them, and, returning to the ship, sailed for another

island, misnamed Barren—for it is exquisitely wooded—resembling Stromboli, in having a large extinct volcanic mountain, whilst springing up in the centre of its crater is a cone, nine hundred feet high, in active eruption, with springs of boiling water pouring out of its base into the sea.

Down through the beautiful Straits of Malacca—sounding for a line of submarine telegraph—and so to Singapore was our next voyage. Here I made the acquaintance of a wealthy Chinaman at whose house I dined several times, in European fashion. His wife and family did not appear on these occasions, though one met them casually about the place. He himself spoke English fluently, and was, one would have thought, greatly influenced by Western ideas. In reality he was absolutely rooted to everything Chinese: believed their civilisation, creeds, mode of life, laws, and literature superior to everything Western, and that his race is destined to over-run the world. It was most interesting to hear these views not only so plainly expressed but so ably defended, based on Chinese Conservatism and the Chinese system in general, which have not stood the strain of five or six thousand years unchanged by mere chance. His house was built on piles in a broad sheet of water where the great leaves of the Victoria Regia—twenty or thirty feet in circumference—spread themselves over its surface. Beautiful ducks, many of wild species but domesticated here, with black and white swans, sailed about in squadrons or came round the projecting balconies of the house to be fed: placid and soothing amusement for those who love these delightful birds. On the border of the lake grew every variety of bamboo, some delicate and feathery, others towering forty feet high, with stems nearly as large as a man's body, their exquisitely graceful fronds reflected in the

water below. In the grounds were all manner of flowering shrubs and exotic plants, whilst scores of tame pheasants and peacocks strutted about, their hoarse calls echoing down the bamboo glades.

Our next halt was in the Camboja River—French Cochin-China—one of the mouths of the mighty Mekong River, which comes into the China Seas after following the most curious course of any river in the world : its sources — two thousand miles away in Tibet — only separated by a short distance from the Brahmaputra which flows into the Western Seas. The Mekong is a wonderful river, too shallow for the lightest craft for many hundred miles, and then for hundreds of miles a cataract, roaring—with deafening noise—through narrow mountain gorges. It had, at that time, never been thoroughly explored—though, in parts, fairly well known—and it was always an unrealised ambition of mine to do so.

With a French pilot on board, we ascended the river to Saigon, the one-time capital of Anam, and now the capital of French Cochin-China. Like every other colony of France, the chief, or rather only, product of it was the *fonctionaire*. Every man one saw was a naval, military or police official, with the exception of two or three small shopkeepers and about a dozen restaurant proprietors or owners of other places of resort. The town itself is flat, stagnant, and unhealthy, with scarcely any signs of life during the day, and what there was of it at night such as one might expect : the male inhabitants being chiefly French soldiers and sailors, and the female, recruits from the froth of Siam and Anam.

We were treated with great hospitality by the French officers, notably by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Admiral de la Grandinière, during the few days we were at Saigon. I, myself, went for an excursion with some French officers a little distance up the river,

and it was evident that the inhabitants felt no friendly disposition towards the French. But, if the trip in itself was fairly dull, the narration of the terrible encounters with the wild beasts of the country with which my travelling companions regaled me made up for it, for, from start to finish, my hair stood on end. There were four of these gentlemen, and every one had done deeds which would have immortalised them in any country and at any period of the world's history. Single-handed, and oft-times desperately wounded, these invincible sportsmen had attacked and defeated elephants, the great Cochin-China tiger—strongest and fiercest of his breed—wild buffaloes, boar and panthers: had wrestled with bears, had unwound themselves from the coils of cobra or that python which grows to such an enormous size in Anam. I heard, too, that these frightful beasts of all kinds were evidently in vast numbers within a few miles of Saigon, and that we should not go far before we fell in with them, which was fortunate, as I could only get away for a few hours. It was, therefore, rather disappointing that, as we made our way up the river, close in to the banks, we saw no signs of anything larger or fiercer than some razor-backed tame pigs, nor did the occasional shots which my companions fired into the tall grass, serve to dislodge anything except a few natives, who naturally bolted up the banks under the fusillade. But though we saw nothing I was constantly assured that even here—out in the boat—we were in some peril, for beasts had been known to swim off and lug men out of boats; so it was necessary to be careful.

None the less it was with a calm mind—through complete confidence in the prowess and nerve of my friends—that I found myself on landing sallying forth with all four of them on a hunting expedition, with about one hundred Anamese men and women bringing up the rear, some to act as beaters, others impelled by

simple curiosity. As we climbed a long, steep ravine, these people, however, seemed to grow tired of the whole affair and gradually tailed off, until by the time we got to the top there were not twenty left, of whom six were women; two carrying babies.

"Ils ont peur, les gredins!" said the Major, the fiercest of all our company, as he looked back, and saw how few followed.

But we—without fear—marched on, for we were armed to the teeth—at least my friends were—with Service rifles and pistols, whilst one had a ship's cutlass in addition hanging down the middle of his back.

We were now moving on cautiously, examining every bush big enough to hide a monkey and closely scrutinising the ground for spoors, when suddenly a frantic scream came from the Major—the most advanced of our party.

"On your stomachs! for the love of God! On your stomachs!"

The three Frenchmen nearest me—evidently accustomed to these tactics—instantly obeyed the order, but I was so taken aback by it, or so puzzled at this kind of sport, that I remained standing and looking about. Not a human being was in sight; the shooters and the Anamese lying completely hidden in the long grass. But some two hundred yards above us I saw clouds of dust and stones rolling down, but not a vestige of an animal. So I came to the conclusion that it might have been a small pig, or possibly a native flying for life, who knew that, in a panic, a man may fire at anything. Anyhow, whatever it was, it was gone in a moment, and a great stillness settled down on the ravine: not a living thing stirring. So I shouted out,

"The beast has gone! Have no fear! there is no danger!"

Then one by one my companions rose to their knees, peered about cautiously and then got on their feet, when the Major—as white as a sheet—came back and joined us. He had been within fifty yards of a terrible monster of a tiger, which he saw lying asleep across the mouth of a cave, half hidden by brambles.

"Un tigre!" gasped another; and I thought the entire party would dissolve into their natural elements. "Pas un vrai tigre?"

"Mais! oui—un tigre—et de la sorte!" and he spread his arms to indicate its gigantic size.

"Why didn't you fire, monsieur?" I asked.

"Moi!" he cried, slapping himself across the breast. "Moi! tout seul, tirer sur un tigre!"

But they all believed he had seen a tiger, except myself, for I felt sure no tiger was within hundreds of miles of the place. Moreover, in some mysterious way, they knew I did not believe a word of his story, though I carefully refrained from saying so. And I felt that the general feeling was against me, first, for holding so light the extreme peril in which their companion had stood; and, secondly, because I had expected of him the reckless folly of firing at a tiger when out tiger shooting.

"Tirer sur un tigre, tout seul," I heard them muttering several times.

That finished the day's sport, but as we trudged back home the Major certainly made up for any lack of decision he may have betrayed, rolling along with a jaunty stride as if tiger-slaying were his ordinary pastime, advancing recklessly in front of us, throwing stones into bushes, clacking his tongue, crying out: "Oh là! là! la grosse bête! Attends moi un peu, que je te flanque une balle dans la tête!"

Nor is there a shadow of doubt that before night time he verily believed he had done something extraordinarily

brave, and that somehow, if any one had shown funk, it was I, being too panic-stricken to lie down, whilst he had displayed courage and presence of mind by warning his companions, and by setting the example of flinging himself down on his stomach.

The Anamites struck me as the ugliest and the most unprepossessing of all the Mongolian races, with the flattest noses to be seen outside a monkey-house. They are short and ill-shaped, with a peculiar formation about the hips which makes them walk with a ridiculously comical swagger. They are absolutely lacking in any moral sense and have all the vices and none of the virtues of either their Northern neighbours, the Chinese, or of their Southern neighbours, the Siamese. The women, as a rule, are even uglier than the men. Those we met, both men and women, took great liberties with my French companions, and when I remarked on it to the Major, he said—

"Mais, monsieur! que voulez vous? ce sont des gens qui ne savent pas se gener, surtout les dames!" which seemed to me self-evident.

Before leaving for Saigon we were petitioned by the natives to go and destroy a gigantic python, which had become the terror of a place about four days' journey from where we were. It was most disappointing to my friends—who, one and all, seemed thirsting for the blood of this particular reptile—that it was imperative that they should return to their leave. So we reluctantly refused the venture and without any further incidents got back to the river, and, on its swift current, soon found ourselves safe once more in Saigon. The last night we spent in Saigon came pretty near being my last anywhere and that of two of my messmates—two of the best fellows that ever sailed—Haslewood and Pat Finlay. We had been going the round of the place with various

adventures, when towards one in the morning we stumbled across a particularly good fellow, chief mate of an English merchant ship lying in the river. He had a ship's boat waiting to take him on board, and was most pressing that we should allow him to put us alongside the *Sylvia* on his way off. But we thought we would not trouble him as it would take him a little out of his course, and so chartered a sanpan and went off in her. But his boat got athwart hawse some vessel's cable and in the rapid stream capsized. He was drowned and some of his crew as well, for the eddies in that river are miniature maelstroms.

CHAPTER XXI

CHINA

Sail for China—Hongkong—Comicality of sporting clerks—Canton prisons—Executions—Infanticide—Cantonese "unemployed"—Astrologers—A brave man and a tiger—Dead Chinaman shipped in San Francisco—Chinese medicine—Driving out devils—A Shamān—Missionary and a booby-hatch.

WE were only too few days in Saigon, and I personally left it with regret. Hongkong was our next halt—my first acquaintance with China. The vastness of this country is overwhelming, its antiquity awe-inspiring, the cleverness of its inhabitants a revelation. A clever Chinaman is probably, with the exception of an Armenian, the cleverest man alive, with something subtle at the back of his brain which a Westerner never gets at, and could not understand if he did.

Of European society, neither in China nor subsequently in Japan, did I see much, though I had one or two very great friends in both countries. Hongkong was then almost in its infancy in comparison with the splendour of to-day, and nowhere on the face of the earth did the dollar mean more. The great houses—keeping steamers of their own in the China Seas to intercept the slower mail steamers and so forestall the

markets with the price of opium—were conducted on a scale of lavishness which staggered one. Almost every clerk kept racing ponies, and was himself housed and fed extravagantly: as it was the policy of the heads of the houses to foster extravagant habits in order to prevent young men accumulating money and entering into competition with them. The Chinese "Housekeeper" was a recognised institution; in fact, indispensable in every bachelor's household, as she kept all his money, superintended his servants, and saved him from wholesale robbery. In return, she was almost universally faithful and honest, although her tenure of office was only the whim of her master.

No sight in civilised life was funnier than the Hongkong Races held in the Happy Valley—near Hongkong—when white-livered British clerks would contend on horseback with swag-bellied Germans or wizened Portuguese for prizes awarded by the merchants, themselves with as much knowledge of racing as a Houndsditch Jew. One feature of the great Chinese houses was the constant succession of new names, as partner after partner retired having made his fortune in a few years.

I made several trips to Canton not only on this occasion, but frequently in later years. Space forbids me to describe at any length the purely Chinese side of life which alone interested me, for even to touch the fringe of its wonderful conditions, peculiarities, and mysteries would fill volumes. I may, however, briefly mention what struck me most.

I went to see the terrible prisons, where forlorn and hopeless wretches were undergoing tortures of many kinds, men in narrow cages where they could neither sit, lie, or stand up straight; others with the kango, a large wooden board like a collar round their neck,

too wide to enable them to reach their face with their hands, so that flies, wasps, and mosquitoes swarmed over their heads and round their eyes undisturbed. I was taken one morning to a large open space within the city walls where hundreds of potters were at work, and crowds of women and children were employed in arranging the pots in rows in the sun. Into this place was marched a long string of some forty criminals—the most woebegone-looking creatures it is possible to imagine, many of them a deadly green colour, from terror—but others, apparently quite indifferent to their fate, looking about them as unconcernedly as an undertaker's man in Kensal Green. Their heads had, of course, not been shaved all the time of their incarceration, and the ragged, bristly hair added to their dreadful appearance. Their hands were tied behind their backs, and they were preceded by a giant of a man carrying a naked broadsword, and were guarded by a ragamuffin body of Chinese soldiers, armed with pikes and ancient muskets.

As the procession advanced the potters rose up hurriedly, the condemned men being made to kneel down facing the heap of clay and forming two long rows. Then an assistant executioner came round, pulled back their jackets, leaving their shoulders bare, and let down the scraggy stump of their pigtails. When all was ready, a man—the governor of the gaol, I believe—screeched out in a high, shrill voice what might have been their sentence, when instantly the assistant seized hold of the pigtail of the first man in the rear rank and jerked his head forward; the executioner, with one swishing blow, severing it absolutely clean from the body—as easily as one knocks off the top of a thistle. Then, with not twenty seconds' interval, the next man, and so on down both rows

until the whole place was one gaping shamble; with men, women, and children looking on, apparently without any feeling. It was a sickening sight, and I myself could not bear to see it, hurrying away half sick after the second head had fallen. An hour or so later I accidentally came across a string of carts with the bodies of these unhappy men piled up in them—arms, legs, and headless trunks sticking out on all sides—scarce room for them to pass in the narrow streets. The ghastly procession was followed by a crowd of little boys and girls grinning and laughing as the jolting of the carts caused the limbs to waggle from side to side. I believe these men were all pirates, and had been captured by two British gunboats, commanded by Compton Domvile—the late Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean—and by Rodney Lloyd, also an Admiral of distinction—both a terror to these Chinese sea-robbers. *À propos* of both these naval men; I do not think smarter, cleaner craft ever sailed than those under their pennants.

In China every scrap of paper that bears writing is burnt ceremoniously, and I went to see the immense kilns—outside the city—where the process is carried out. Hundreds of men, with baskets on their backs and spiked sticks in their hands for picking up paper in the streets, were coming and going, whilst others crammed the paper into the kilns.

The Chinese look with horror on the way we treat printed matter, for to them everything that is in any conceivable degree "literature" is sacred. For on it may be inscribed the name of God or some holy aphorism of Confucius. Thus men are continually perambulating the streets to collect old paper, not for its value, but for what may be written on it. In northern ports this paper is often sent out to sea in barges to be reverently committed to the deep.

Well-to-do Chinamen are often seen with weeks or months of growth of hair on their heads, though accompanied by servants with perfectly clean-shaven heads. It is the sign of mourning, and in proportion to the nearness of relationship so is the growth obligatory; for parents about fifteen months, for a wife six, for a mother-in-law ten days. Shaving of the head, and the pigtail was not originally a Chinese custom, but was forced on them by their Tartar conquerors. Chinese barbers are often shampooers: their shampooing process, extremely simple, consisting in punching the legs, arms, and chest with closed fist and banging the stomach with the hand flat. I never tried it myself, but I remember watching a Chinaman undergoing the operation, and was not surprised to see him get up suddenly, wrap a loin cloth about him and rush into the street, where he was violently sick.

Living in some half-ruined tower or in holes in the vast walls of Canton are hordes of the people we call the "unemployed," who obtain alms from the timid with threats and hideous howlings. But very often—unlike us effete English—the sturdy Chinese citizen takes the law into his own hand, and does not hesitate to crack their skulls with a thick stick, so that these idle ruffians, who are also cowards as are most of their kidney, do not multiply as rapidly as one might expect.

Walking round the walls of Canton early one morning I saw numbers of dead babies lying about, mostly little girls, left to die, poor little souls, because no one wanted them. Many thousands of infants are thus exposed every year in Canton alone, and the number taken throughout China must amount to millions. I went into opium dens and saw the usual sights, but carried away the impression, which, as a magistrate of very many years standing, I still retain, that I prefer the

opium-smoker to the European drunkard; that he is far less harmful to society generally, and certainly not the direct cause of so much crime. Nothing is more curious amongst the Chinese than their acceptance as of scientific truth, matters which Westerns of the lowest intelligence recognise as imposture, namely, occultism, which in China is as recognised a profession as that of the law or medicine. The keenest intellects amongst the Chinese believe in astrology, the casting of horoscopes, divination, and so through the whole gamut of these childish frauds. The fortune-teller is consulted on everything, and what is more strange, seems actually to believe in his own humbug. Nor are his clients merely the fatuous, the idle, the silly, and the neurotic, such, as in England, pour guineas into the laps of Bond Street swindlers and spiritualistic mediums. I went once with a friend of mine, in Swatow, to the house of a fortune-teller, a man brought up in a Chinese University and as much a recognised seer as was any ancient Israelite prophet. This man's specialisation in occultism was astrology, and his knowledge of astronomy was not only quite up to date but most extensive. But his chief guide-book was the Imperial Almanack—an official document published annually and having the imprimatur of authority—its pages showing the most fitting months for marriages, for building, for travelling, for the consecration of temples, in fact for all the business of life. A commoner and lower form of Chinese divination is by shuffling bits of cardboard—in a box—on which are inscribed sentences from the writings of Confucius or other great teachers, which, through the vast possibilities of commutation of the Chinese symbolic character, are capable of many different interpretations, to elucidate which and their application to the particular individual constituting the

skill of the seer. Mystic meanings are discovered: a proposed marriage will be fortunate or the reverse: a house being built will be destroyed by fire: a contemplated journey will be prosperous or will terminate in shipwreck. Even amongst the highest Literates of China, the aristocracy of learning, few will be found with courage enough to disregard such omens. Of course there are still humbler professors in the art of divination, ignorant of everything, who wander about the country, their only qualification a power of invention; but the higher-class professors are men educated *ad hoc*, and taking themselves and their divinations seriously: as much as did Epictetus when examining the entrails of birds.

I met an Englishman, who, in spite of being a confirmed opium-eater, was a man of great nerve. I cannot explain the paradox, but here is a fact about him. He was once shooting snipe in the paddy fields outside a remote Chinese village in the Southern Provinces, when, to his astonishment, he beheld men, women, and children, old and young, fleeing for their lives from their houses, in all directions. He was a perfect Chinese scholar, so he stopped a woman, still on the run, and asked what it was all about. A tiger had come into the village from the neighbouring jungle, had killed a woman, and had dragged her body into a house. Then my friend, drawing out his snipe-shot cartridges and replacing them by buck shot, walked into the village, where not a human being was left. In the middle of the street he came across a pool of blood and a mark where something had been trailed through the dust; and following this terrible spoor other indications showed him plainly that the woman's story was true. For the marks led to a small shop, where, looking in through the open door, he met the glaring eyes of a huge tiger, the brute's jaws

smeared with the blood of a woman who lay between his paws. With a roar the animal sprang at him, but in one instant my friend fired both barrels down its throat, and the beast fell in a heap over the body of its victim.

On our way north to Japan, and indeed many times after, we visited most of the coast ports of China—Amoy, Foochow, Shanghai, and so on. In every one of these the social conditions of life were the same, the quest of the dollar the beginning and end of everything. In those days in China there was only one European nation of whom any one took account—our countrymen; for China was practically British, and what foreigners there were, depended entirely on British protection, mostly people in a very small way and only there on sufferance. Gradually, though, our wiseacres at home allowed this predominance to be filched away, Germans and Frenchmen thrusting in their noses where our Treaty rights gave us an unquestioned position excluding theirs. However, that is another story, and need find neither apology nor explanation in modern British foreign politics.

I was one day rambling about some of the lower parts of Amoy when I fell in with a Chinaman who spoke something better than the usual "Pidgin English." He had been in England as a servant in the Chinese Embassy, and knew the seamy side of London better than I did. His experiences of San Francisco were also instructive; his opinion of Christian morality waggish, to say the least of it. His own business in that gay American city had been rather a lugubrious one, shipping his dead countrymen back to China for burial in their native land. It was a very profitable one, for—as with Persians and other Mahommedan Asiatics who send their dead to be buried at Mecca—the moral responsibility of the friends of the defunct ceases when the agent takes

charge of the body. The result was that for every ten bodies this man contracted to bury in China only one perhaps ever got there. Some were never shipped at all, but were buried on the beach : others were thrown overboard the day after leaving port, whilst many coffins, through connivance with the American Customs, were used for smuggling, and came laden with American produce. In Yokohama, at different times, I have seen coffins being hoisted out into junks, which carried them to Chinese ports where smuggling was as recognised a business as it is in Leghorn or New York. By this time less and less of these coffins contained human remains, having been emptied at sea and filled up on board ship with various goods, and even in those in which the dead had been allowed to remain, the vacant spaces would be crammed up with such things as tinned salmon and preserved fruit, soap, tobacco, and what not.

My casual friend, the dead body contractor, invited me to his house, a large, well-built place, a little out of the town, close to the sea, where ten or fifteen junks lay alongside a small jetty, all his own property. His establishment was a model of order, and his wife, who also spoke pidgin English, was a rosy-cheeked Manchou, quite a different type from the white-faced China woman of the South. They had two daughters—one present, the other absent—and one son. I inquired where the son was.

"Up top side with wifey," said the mother, "like makey look see?"

"Yes," I said, "if they can't come down."

"No can come down," answered the mother. "Wifey all the same dead."

"Dead!" I exclaimed. "How can I see her then?"

"You all the same belong family friend."

"All right!" I said. "I'll go up."

In a large room, profusely decorated with flowers, with a number of lamps burning and the whole air laden with the smell of smoking joss-sticks, I saw the figure of a young girl of eighteen or twenty lying in a square-shaped coffin dressed in violet-coloured silk, her hair neatly done, her small, white hands folded on her breast, her diminutive feet peeping out below her broad, white silk trousers. She looked as if she were asleep. By her side, on a bed spread out on the floor, sat her husband, a nice-looking youth—apparently quite unconcerned at the death of his young wife—holding his opium pipe in his hand, and, by his side, a bottle of Martell's brandy. He had his shoes off, and as the father and mother crossed the threshold of the room they kicked off theirs. I followed their example out of respect for the dead. I asked afterwards why they went shoeless into the presence of the departed, and they told me it was for fear of awaking her soul, which slept near her as long as the body was unburied, and also that the husband had to remain on watch until she was actually under ground. This precaution threw a light on Chinese habits, and reminded me of a similar custom described by Herodotus—in the "Euterpe"—in connection with embalming of women in Thebes. I asked what the girl had died of, and her father told me she had been cursed by a begging friar for refusing him alms, but from his description it was clearly peritonitis, though terror of the curse may have helped. I asked, out of curiosity, what remedies had been given. Translated into our vernacular, he said—

"The best that the world can produce, and the most skilful doctor in the East. She had two hundred pills of gentian and hartshorn the first day; on the second she had a mixture—weighing three-quarters of a pound—of walnuts, treacle, sulphur, pigs' lard, camomile flowers,

and spider's web: an absolutely certain remedy in China."

I made a note of this in my note-book.

"And how did she get on with that?" I asked.

"Not too muchee well, but doctor man say, if live three day she all right; give more medicine. But girly makee die and so give no more."

It struck me that Chinese doctors must be fond of giving physic. But their system of fees is in advance of ours, no cure no fee, or a bargain is made, to cure for so much. Any man in China can be, or may call himself, a doctor—much the same thing—and there is no qualification necessary. In consequence, the trades' union spirit of European medicine men is non-existent in China, for it is not compulsory to endorse the views of each and every imbecile in the trade, as is done in so-called "consultations" in the West.

But, strange to say, I had not done with death for that day; for the same evening, passing a Chinese house in the crowded part of the town, I heard a deafening din, drums and tom-toms and the shrill scream of the Chinese flute—ear-piercing beyond belief—with a rumbling bass accompaniment of conches, sounding like bulls roaring with pain. Numbers of people blocked the street, every now and then crushing each other together as those nearest the house jammed back against the crowd behind, as squibs and crackers came firing out of the upper windows, accompanied by loud reports, like pistol shots, but made with huge wooden pop-guns. I forced my way through the mob and got inside the house. On a long table in the lower room were spread out all sorts of Chinese food, great bowls of rice, roasted rats, flattened-out ducks, joints of greasy pork, fish of many kinds—eels predominating—with plenty of liquor, chiefly European, such as gin, rum, brandy, and beer. Eating, as for

dear life, were five or six Taoist priests—in long dressing gowns, some yellow and others black, with tall black hats on their heads—who were having a spell off from the incantation going on upstairs. I went upstairs and into a large room where a fat, puffy old Chinaman—seated in a chair with yellow satin draped round it—was clearly at the point of death, his face cadaverous, his eyeballs green, his lips white. In front of him several Taoist priests were mumbling some hocus-pocus, engaged in exorcising the fiend which was causing the illness of the patient. I could not wait long, curious as I was to witness the end—which I thought must be at hand—for the heat and stench were overpowering. But these I would have endured had I thought there was any chance of seeing the evil spirit come out of the man: which would have been interesting. So whether it did, or did not, or went with him to the next world, I cannot say. Anyhow, on passing the house later in the day I learnt that the man was dead, which did not surprise me, and I asked a Chinese servant, who was standing near, what his end had been.

"Too muchy debble inside. Him catchy three piecy debble. One piecy man no can do three piecy debble."

"How did they know there were three?" I asked.

"Priest man, he countee debbles, when man makee die, see 'em all the same rats."

"Where did they go?" I inquired.

"Go nother piecy man's house: by and by priest maky catchy."

"Why not get a cat?"

"Cat no can do, maky cat sick."

* * * * *

At a village some ten miles outside Foochow I saw a conjuror—a Mongolian, from the extreme west of China, near the Altai Range—perform what to me appeared miracles. He was an extraordinary man, with something

weird and hypnotic about him, and it is to hypnotic suggestion that I attribute some of his tricks, for, though I stood close to him and watched him narrowly, I could not detect the fraud, if fraud there were.

This Mongolian looked like a man a hundred and fifty years old, a shrivelled skin with hundreds of wrinkles, his oblique eyes—shining with a light which seemed to come from within—had a horrible and fascinating stare, so that when he caught one's own he seemed to hold them. He was dressed in an old yellow tunic, embroidered with some cabalistic pattern worked in red, inside this a silk garment of the same shape, which had once been scarlet. On his head was a high Astrakan hat, from under which long snake-like locks depended. He had a retinue of ten to fifteen ragged-looking ruffians—of Mongolian type—carrying various instruments of music, drums, and large conches. A small boy, of five or six, was also of the party—a bright, merry little lad—quite out of harmony with his strange companions. The conjuror's paraphernalia consisted of a small arăba—native cart—drawn by a wiry Turkoman pony—carrying an open wicker-work basket cage, divided into two compartments, in one of which was a small tiger. A few pots and pans, all exposed to view, some faggots of wood, and his own drinking bowl and rice saucer completed the outfit. He stood, with his cart, on a hard-beaten patch of ground used by potters, with no more underground contrivances than you would find under the asphalte of Trafalgar Square. Before beginning his tricks he stripped, all save his cummerbund, when one saw that he was a living skeleton, a mere bag of bones. He began by putting a pot to boil on a wood fire, filling it with water out of a gourd. Whilst it was boiling, by way of diversion, he seized the small boy and crammed him into the compartment of the cage next to the tiger which growled furiously, and tried to grab the

boy through the wicker-work. Then the conjuror, or Shamān, to give him his Eastern title, suddenly drew up the dividing partition, the boy and beast seeming to face each other, whilst, at the same moment, he threw a large canvas cover over the cage. In an instant there were terrible screams in an unmistakable child's voice, and a most distinct sound of a conflict inside, followed by a sickening noise like the crunching of bones. The crowd grew terrified, it was so intensely realistic: women screamed and some would have rushed to the cage, but they were held back by the men, who all seemed terrorised by the old man's eyes. Some people assert that in this exhibition they have seen blood stream down under the cart, but I saw none. All this time a hideous din was being kept up by the half-naked ruffians who formed the shamān's following, blowing large horns five and six feet long, and banging on drums, and, with this noise still going on, the Shamān jumped into the cart and pulled off the cover. The boy had vanished, but the tiger—evidently wildly excited—lay swishing his tail. Where or how the boy went, I have no idea, but in a minute or two afterwards he came pushing his way from outside the dense ring of people and went and sat down unconcernedly alongside the cart. This trick over, the Shamān now turned his attention to the pot. He picked up five or six stones from the ground and dropped them into the boiling water, stirring it round and round with a piece of bamboo. I saw the stones bobbing about at the bottom. He stirred it again and again, and finally threw in a powder, probably potassium, for instantly there was a bright violet flame. In a minute or so he took the pot off the fire, tilted it up, when out flopped three Chinese ducks—of that flattened breed one sees herded by millions on the banks of Chinese rivers—and as the birds attempted to waddle away, the Shamān caught them, threw them back into the pot, put on the

lid, and looked round on the crowd with a fierce stare. Once more the pot seemed to boil; again he took the lid off, and this time capsized the water entirely out of it. He then carried the pot round for the people to examine, and in the bottom of it I saw two snakes wriggling about, which the Shamān ejected from the pot by shaking it from side to side, catching them again immediately and putting them into a bag, which he threw on the top of the tiger's cage. I must remind the reader that all this time the man was practically naked. His next trick was that often seen in India, and needs no description: a boy tied up in a sack, the sack pierced in every direction by a sword, the usual screams, and, finally, the sack cut in two. The boy reappears unhurt, often up a tree, a hundred yards away. This trick, too, I do not understand.

I hoped to have seen the great semi-religious trick of a Shamān burning his own body on a pyre, a performance of special sanctity. This man, however, did not do it: but I have met men who have seen it, and have been told that it is utterly inexplicable. The Shamān lays himself naked on the top of a pyre of highly inflammable wood, and begins a drawling, sing-song chant, beating the while a small, sacred drum. Outsiders then set fire to the wood, a dense smoke rises from the midst of which the chant and drum are still heard. The fire takes, perhaps, half an hour to burn out, but no one sees the Shamān rise up or go away, though a crowd of people make a complete ring round him. At the end of this time he seems suddenly to appear squatting on his hams not far from the fire, still chanting, still beating his drum.

Near the Pagoda Anchorage, a pleasant spot below Foochow, when passing a Protestant Mission-house one day, the rhythmic cadence of girl's voices—repeating in unison what might have been the Apostles' Creed—caught

my ear, and I ventured to look in through the open door. It was a pleasing sight, some ten or fifteen girls and women, in the dress of the working-class Chinawoman—short blue tunic with white tags and loops, flapping trousers which come half way below the knee—their well-turned ankles and neat feet bare, seated in a row on a bench, in a wide, cool room, the air laden with the scent of stephanotis, or tuberose, their favourite flowers. On the floor sprawled a selection of native babies—the queerest little people—playing with an English fox-terrier, who seemed to enjoy rolling them over and over. In the centre of the group stood the missionary, a good-looking young Englishman of thirty, dressed in correct clerical toggery, but wearing white duck trousers. At one end of the room I noticed a kind of booby-hatch, and wondered what it was for, but as I looked the face of the missionary's wife peered out through it, a pinched-up person with blue spectacles, and nearer fifty than twenty. Then I understood what it was for.

The missionary was very agreeable and explained to me that his converts were mostly recruited from the washerwoman and flower-boat class, though he sometimes landed a coolie, or some old men past work. His pay was £200 a year, and house rent free, and again I thought the missionary business must be fairly agreeable: barring the booby-hatch.

He took me to see an especially venerated Taoist temple dating, he said, from about the year 70 A.D. Round the courtyard were scores of huge Chinese vases, some ornamented, some of plain red clay. They were supposed to contain the spirits of the dead, and he told me—as an excellent joke—how, once visiting this place with a brother missionary, they had entered into a violent discussion with the Taoist priests as to the truth of this belief, when his friend—to demonstrate that the Taoist belief was all

lies—kicked over one of these vases to let the spirits out, if there were any. There was such a commotion made by the priests, that he and his friend had to flee for their lives.

Personally, I thought it a pity they had not left them there.

CHAPTER XXII

JAPAN

Japan, an unsolved mystery—British purity prigs, and Mother Grundy would expire in a week—A first experience of the great unclothed—The Inland Sea—Scandalous behaviour of Europeans—Sir Harry Keppel—Drowning of American Admiral and eleven of his men—Mikasai and junk-women—Two adventures with bears—Japan's Paphos—The Geisha—The Gaku: Japanese music—*Sylvia* pays off in Hong-kong—Back in England—Florence—Victor Emanuel—H.M.S. *Caledonia*—Temple of Diana—Affair with brigands—Malta fever—Given up—Pull round—Invalided home—Get married—Retire—The fighting Marquis of Tweeddale—A haunted house.

MANY able pens have attempted to describe Japan, and have succeeded in giving a fairly accurate description of its scenery: the appearance of its inhabitants: their costumes: laws and religion. But no writer that I know has ever drawn the veil from the inner life of this mysterious people. Hence I do not for a moment pretend that I can.

When I first knew Japan we practically stepped back into a civilisation some two thousand six hundred years old, the Mikado—living far away inland and out of human ken—was more a semi-divine myth than a human ruler: the Tycoon, like the Marshals in the old Court of France, was still all

potent, the great feudatory chiefs, the Daimiôs, still wielded despotic power in their respective principalities: the two-sworded class, the Samurai, still recognised no law but the will of their over-lord and the keen edge of their own swords. No land, no nation, no circumstance of life was ever less understood by the West than was this great group of islands: one felt lost in it, one could not seize any salient point of resemblance between it and one's own country. It seemed inhabited by a different race of beings. And what law and order! A man could not steal a button and hope to escape detection. He might fly his own part of the country, might wander from north to south, or endeavour to lose himself in the thousand islands of the Inland Sea. Sooner or later he would be tracked, arrested and executed. As a consequence there was no theft, few locks and keys, no doors to the houses. Courtesy and courage seemed indigenous to the soil: I never met a rude man or heard of a coward amongst the Japanese. But then you were in a land where the slightest infraction of good manners carried with it a fair chance of being split in two by a single blow from a sword, without being asked to explain. If a man jostled another of the sword-bearing class in the street, it was a mere matter of who got his sword out first as to which of the two walked off or which remained in the road until what was left of him was picked up by his friends. This kind of thing makes men very civil to each other.

Concerning the women of Japan it is impossible to convey an adequate idea to those who have not known them. That they are fascinating is, of course, a trite remark. Gentle in manner and voice, modest—from a point of view the opposite of Western conventionality—faithful, affectionate, unselfish, essentially feminine, always amusing and good-tempered; frequently extremely witty,

and of spotless personal cleanliness, it is no wonder that Westerns come under their spell. Then, too, their position in men's affairs is clearly defined. Never meddling in business or "nagging," a wise and patient influence in her household, she makes that ideal wife and companion for whom so many men in Western life sigh in vain. With great latitude allowed them before marriage, after it infidelity was almost unheard of before Europeans came on the scene. I once saw a number of people lining the banks of the river at Osaka looking at the bodies of a man and woman, lashed together, floating about in a back water. The interest in the crowd was not the sight of these bodies themselves, but in the fact that they had been unfaithful to the marriage tie.

If such a law obtained in Europe, the waters of every principal river—from the Thames to the Tiber—would be blocked, and there would be no standing room on the bridges for the crowds who had assembled to identify their missing friends.

Amongst these enlightened people of Japan, who, from the profound depth of Western ignorance we then thought something only slightly removed from savages, the pseudo-moral ideas and coercive laws of Mother Grundy and the purity section of the London County Council could not live. The Japanese in those early, uncontaminated days lived wholesome lives, as nearly natural—in the true sense of the word—as the limitations of a complex civilisation rendered possible. I say advisedly—with an experience in all lands which perhaps few have exceeded—that at that time the Japanese were the happiest people, the most contented, the best governed, in the universe. Nowhere on the face of the earth was the material condition of the mass of the people to be compared to that of the Japanese. However that is all gone now—gone their frugal lives, gone the security in

which they lived, and gone—if all I hear now is true—that virtue which set them so far above Westerns.

The first place in this delightful country on which I set my eyes was Nagasaki, and well I remember the bewildering effect it produced on me as we steamed in slowly and dropped an anchor. It is true it had been opened to European trade for some time, and many European business houses were already in full swing, chief amongst them the Glennies. But practically the hand of Western pollution had as yet had no time to leave the stains of its finger marks on the country it had come to rob, and I saw the people precisely as they had been when, with desperate valour, they had faced the wrath of the whole world and—with that far-seeing sagacity which is so essentially Japanese—collected all the missionaries in Japan and flung them into the sea over the cliffs of the island of Papenberg, just outside Nagasaki.

I pass over my first impressions of the country and its inhabitants because they in no way differed from those of hundreds of writers who have described them. But my first day's experience was certainly something to remember, for on landing I met some people with whom I had been very friendly in Hongkong, a parson, who had come as chaplain to the place, and his wife. We were all absolute novices to the country—they only having arrived the day before. I managed to get some horses—from the Glennies—and the lady and I went for a ride, being directed to a village about four miles out. The road led over the hills, and below us lay the winding harbour and an archipelago of islands, with Papenberg a conspicuous object in the foreground: and, by chance, a fleet of some fifty or sixty large junks standing down the channel—their sails snow-white above their yellow hulls—the cognizances of the Daimios, to whom they owed allegiance, showing in black patches. As we crested the hill the

road debouched suddenly on the village from amongst thick bamboo plantations, so that our approach had not been noticed, partly also to be accounted for by the fact that it was about three o'clock, the usual hour for the Japanese daily bath.

The long straight street, with all its curious Japanese features—its paper houses, its swinging sign-boards, and the inevitable temple at the end of it—lay deserted before us, but some one finally espied us, and setting up a shout of "Togin! Togin!" (foreigners), pell-mell, out of two or three large wash-houses, came the entire population of the place—all entirely nude, of all ages and of both sexes—and gathered round our horses staring at us in unabashed wonder. They came about us like bees, and though perfectly polite were embarrassingly inquisitive, the women placing their hands on my companion's knees to try and follow the mystery of a side saddle, whilst—though what they said was of course unintelligible to us—it was easy enough to understand they were struck with admiration at her pretty face and the charm of her smile. It was an awkward moment for us both, this surging mass of white nakedness—for it is the colour makes all the difference—but, fortunately, my friend was too much of a lady, in the restricted meaning of the word, to be a prude, so we made the best of it; and, to show them we had no fear of molestation, we dismounted and stood amongst them, my companion—a childless wife with a passion for children—taking up in her arms a tiny tot of two or three, as naked as the day it was born, and kissing it. Then these hospitable people led us off to the head villager's house, where *sans ceremonie* the family donned their clothes and gave us hot saki, tea, and all kinds of food: more curious than palatable.

Except for the circumstance that they were unclothed, I contend that these people were infinitely more civilised

—in the true sense of being civil—than our vulgar crowds in Oxford Street or the Strand, who will jeer and jabber at any unfortunate Oriental who may appear in his own costume. There is more decorum in a Japanese public bath than in a London church, and less necessity for beadles and vergers. *Honi soit qui mal y pense* might be written all over Japan: for there is only one class of persons which is excluded from their public baths in Japan, the sort of people who are permitted to wander about St. Paul's Cathedral at dusk.

Consideration for others is the basis of Japanese good breeding, and a woman in a Japanese bath house has more of it than her European sister in a *matinée* hat in a London theatre. They have, however, one point of resemblance, neither of them feel shame.

In those days practically every man and woman and child had a hot bath once a day, the custom dating from possibly six centuries before Christ. The bath house in towns and villages, a long low building, was, I believe, supported entirely at public expense—like those of ancient Rome. Entering you put your clothes into a pigeon-hole and walked down into the water, which began shallow at one end and might be four or five feet deep at the other, and was often too hot for Europeans to find agreeable, but the Japanese, by use, could stand it though almost boiling. No indecorum took place, and an unwashed British mob in Exeter Hall would not behave as well. Some of the Japanese use soap, and wash it off at a spout before going into the general bath, others content themselves with bobbing about in the water. When you come out you find a small towel, the size of a pocket-handkerchief, in your pigeon-hole, with which you dry yourself as best you may, and the ceremony is over.

Japanese is not a difficult language to learn colloquially,

that is, enough to get about with, for it is mellifluous in sound and easily caught—resembling Italian to some extent—and the very opposite of the illusive, impossible tones of Chinese. In a short time many of us picked up a fair smattering of tea-house Japanese, could ask our way, tell a Moosmé she was pretty, or buy things. One or two of my more studious messmates, notably Maxwell and Butt—one of our lieutenants—learnt it really well, the latter taking lessons daily from the best teachers he could find.

Much of our work lay in the Inland Sea, certainly the most beautiful expanse of salt water in the world. Some three hundred miles long it varies in width from sixty miles to two or three, dotted with innumerable islands, with towns and villages lining its shores. To the south stretches a long range of snow mountains, whilst everywhere scenes of most fantastic beauty present themselves. In those days the smaller islands were full of game, deer of many kind—from the red deer to small roes—pheasants, wild duck, wild goose, teal, widgeon, and in some of the marshy parts of the mainland millions of snipe. I had many a delightful expedition, camping out on these islands, and one night witnessed a rare sight: a battle between two fine stags. It was broad moonlight, and I was sitting outside my tent, when I heard the war challenge of a stag—not half a mile off—which was soon taken up by another, apparently on a hill about a mile away. Gradually the challenger and his answering foe got nearer and nearer to each other, so I seized my gun and hurried off to where I thought they would meet. Soon the sound of clashing antlers—which I could distinctly hear—told me the battle had already begun, and creeping down into an open glade, I saw two splendid animals battering into each other with the utmost fury, every now and then drawing back, and then rushing

together with such a shock that both reeled back on their haunches. I watched the fight for several minutes, the animals trying all manner of tactics to get their antlers side ways into the other's ribs. Suddenly one of them, with foam streaming from his muzzle, sprang six or eight feet into the air, looking enormous in the moonlight, and, lighting almost on the back of his enemy, bore him down to the earth, driving his antler under his ribs. The wounded beast tried to stagger up, but the conqueror had him down again in a moment, battering him unmercifully all over the body and head with his horns, jumping and trampling on him with his sharp hoofs. I could easily have shot both these gallant beasts for I was now not fifteen yards off, hidden in deep bracken, but I felt that the conqueror deserved to live. So I stood up and gave a shout, holding my gun ready and half expecting he would charge. But he looked at me for a moment in the broad moonlight, and then, with a great bound, plunged into the forest, from whence immediately came the sound of a herd of hinds—which, unseen by me, had been watching the combat—following after him. I went up to the wounded animal, but he was panting with his last gasp, so I put him out of his pain. It was the world's everlasting story: he was an old stag and his time had come to give place to younger blood. As I look up in my study I see one of his feet arranged as a bell pull, and before me rises all that scene—with lessons, too, one does not easily forget—of lost battles.

It was a matter of immense interest to many of us that we were brought into contact with people of whom Europe still knew nothing; into the presence of great Daimios, whose castles were measured by miles of moat with garrisons of five hundred to a thousand men, and into great and well-built towns whose very names were

unknown in the West. Without being aware of it we constantly handled, or were offered for purchase, art objects of almost incalculable value: fourteenth-century paintings, wood and ivory carvings of the eighth century, rare writings, arms fashioned long before William the Conqueror invaded England, pottery now priceless, silks and materials more valuable than the rarest lace. All this we ignorant sea-faring men knew nothing about, though literally a fortune was lying within our reach, It is true I sent my people many curios—good, bad and indifferent—but, at home—and in England generally—people were no more enlightened as to their merits than I was, so that when my father's house was broken up they were all sold and scattered. But by chance a small piece of pottery came into my possession again, and I believe it to be unique. It was made in Japan before the present race of Japanese had conquered the land, when the whole of the islands were inhabited by Ainos, that hairy race now confined to the northern islands.

In the *Sylvia* we were present when a great international function came off: the official opening to trade of the Port of Kobe. It is difficult to picture the difference between the Kobe of then and of to-day, for the hostility of the Japanese to foreigners was so marked in that part that there were no fewer than twelve British, three American, and three French men-of-war assembled to enforce this Article of the Treaty with Japan, which Sir Harry Parkes had just extorted from its unwilling Government.

It was an invidious and unpleasant spectacle; for under the protection of our guns—which fired royal salutes, though heaven alone knows why, as nothing less royal can be imagined—a cloud of so-called traders, the scum of the foreign communities from Chinese ports, rushed ashore with indecent haste, bringing with them

dozens of cases of whisky, or—as bluejackets call it, with more force than elegance, rot-gut—with bales of trashy soft goods and all manner of fraudulent rubbish, which the unhappy Japanese were to be cajoled into buying: always having to pay the purest gold and silver, at an exorbitant rate of exchange, fixed by Treaty.

By evening rows and rows of canvas shanties had been built on the Concession ground, whilst a few Japanese houses had been taken possession of and were already in full swing as grog shops. So that, long before dark, this peaceful, orderly Japanese town, in which for centuries riot had been unknown, was converted into a place where hell seemed to be let loose, with Japanese and Europeans rolling about drunk, fighting, bawling, chasing women, and behaving in a manner which would not have been tolerated anywhere in the civilised world. It was a coarse and degrading debauch this inauguration of Christian civilisation.

The Concession, in which Westerns might trade, was a sandy piece of land some forty or fifty acres in extent, but beyond its limits it was unsafe to go, for Samurai stood all round, and even the drunken rowdies knew what that meant. Whilst all this was going on a cloud of Consular flags of almost every known description was already to be seen fluttering over houses that had been allotted to the various nationalities, all of which, save the English, American and French, had sneaked in under alien protection, conspicuous amongst these world-interlopers, the Germans.

The Fleets remained in Kobe for about a week, until some kind of order gradually evolved itself out of the chaos, and then my ship, embarking Sir Harry Keppel and a crowd of British and foreign officials, sailed for Osaka, the stronghold of a great Daimio, an adherent of the Mikado, and in opposition to the Tycoon. Arrived

off the mouth of the river, in spite of extremely bad weather and a very heavy swell on the bar, our Admiral and his staff landed and paid an official visit, but it was with great difficulty and danger that they finally got back to the *Sylvia* late at night, in a launch belonging to the *Rodney*, all wet through and half famished. But Sir Harry himself was as jovial as if he had been at a wedding, for nothing ever put him out. The *Sylvia's* steam cutter had been unable to cross the bar so bad was the weather, and, with fires extinguished, had drifted back up the river. However, as the Admiral had to return to the Fleet we took him to his flagship at Kobe and went back next day to Osaka for our boat; not without some anxiety for the fate of the people in her. They, however, had been courteously treated; a strong guard having been placed over them. For stories of the abomination of the Settlement at Kobe had already spread far and wide, and everywhere the Japanese were furious at this desecration of their sacred soil.

A day or two after this it was the turn of Admiral Bell, of the United States Navy, to visit the Daimio of Osaka, but refusing the offer of a British steam launch, in order that he might land flying the Stars and Stripes, and in spite of warning of the danger of the bar, he insisted on crossing it in his own rowing barge, when his boat swamped—as every one knew it would—drowning him, his Flag-Lieutenant, and eleven men. It did Western prestige much harm, for the Daimio, who, we heard, witnessed the scene from his walls, was reported to have said, that it was one of the most foolhardy things ever seen, and that no man pretending to be a seaman would have attempted it.

With such scenes as these going on it is not surprising that the Japanese had the profoundest contempt for the Westerns, more especially as the general belief was that

they were all, more or less, rascals, and their civilisation a disgraceful sham. They may not be entirely wrong if they think so still, though such rapid strides have been made since those days towards ours that I doubt if anywhere in the kingdom of the Mikado there are now people so unsophisticated as to expect anything else. A very striking difference between Japanese and Western peoples was that, associating with the lower classes in Japan, one never felt shocked or one's sense of decency outraged.

To compare the Japanese of the peasant or working class with corresponding classes in Europe is impossible. The adaptation of artistic ideas, consistent with utility, to everything he handles is second nature to a Japanese, and seems to have refined his manners. His patient industry, the care with which he tills his land, and the peace of his home life stand in sad contrast to the indolence, the domestic strife, the brutish disregard of everything that is beautiful, the contempt for everything approaching refinement common to the great majority of our lower orders. Then consider the infinite labour the Japanese bestow on irrigation. A stream of water will be carried in bamboo pipes through gorges where to fix them and keep them in repair, men have to descend over perilous precipices perhaps hundreds of feet high, where a slip would be fatal. Yet this risk is incurred to water a patch of rice less than a quarter of an acre in extent.

But I do not wish to champion Japanese ethics in every respect, for certain of their religious rites would have disgraced Eleusis, notably those of a celebrated temple in the Gulf of Yeddo which I visited. But even here it was only the most superstitious and ignorant of the people that were to be found as worshippers. I believe we were the first Europeans who had ever seen this extraordinary place, for it had been kept secret, even from some

Japanese, for centuries. I have sketches of it carefully locked away from public gaze.

In the Inland Sea we went to Mitasai, a place of call for trading junks going on long voyages to China, the Loochoo Islands, Formosa, or the Korea. Here almost the entire population consisted of women who were prepared to embark with any sailor requiring a companion. There was a regular tariff, according to age and looks, and a commission of so much per cent. went to the over-lord. But we must not throw stones, for it was precisely the same on the lower deck of any British man-of-war in the eighteenth century and well on into the nineteenth.

Yokohama was our headquarters during our stay in Japan, and here we frequently remained for many weeks at a time. The 9th Regiment was there then: the moving spirits in it, as regards sport, being Jephson, and Pennel Elmhirst the well-known M.F.H. Drag hunts were our chief amusement, over very stiff country on stubborn Japanese ponies, almost impossible to hold, and, being accustomed to being led, difficult to guide. Large American steamers had already begun to run from San Francisco, and boarding one, one day, in my gig a ridiculous thing occurred, which threw light on a then American female custom, now doubtless abandoned. Seeing a pretty, smartly-dressed American woman with astonishing masses of golden hair, looking about for means of disembarking, I ventured to speak to her, and discovered that she was alone and knew no one in Yokohama, or where to go on landing. With the affability of a sailor, tempered by his diffidence, I offered her my services, which she somewhat eagerly accepted, and, collecting her baggage, I hailed the gig to come alongside. As there was a heavy "lop of a sea" on it was difficult for the boat to get hold of the side ladder, the bowman making several

ineffectual attempts to catch on with his boat-hook, until, pitched off his feet by a sudden lurch of the boat and making a desperate grab at anything, he unfortunately hooked on to the American girl's hat—she standing at the bottom of the ladder ready to jump into the boat when she could get an opportunity—and dropped it into the water. Alas! off came her headgear, and, with it, every scrap of her charming hair, displaying an absolutely bald and snow-white poll. Strange to say she was neither angry nor disconcerted, but laughed more than any of us, whilst the bluejacket fished the whole apparatus up out of the waves and handed it to her, all dripping wet. But she preferred to tie a silk scarf round her head, and thus attired leapt nimbly into the boat and so landed. She told me that she was not naturally bald, but that she found it infinitely less trouble to have her head shaved and to keep a lot of *coiffures* ready, wig, hat, and all complete, and to clap them on as it suited her fancy. I often met her in Yokohama, and observed that she must have dozens of them, her hair never being two days alike.

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We returned to the Inland Sea, where trouble had broken out. For the Tycoon had been defeated at Osaka by the Mikado's troops, and Bizen's men had fired on Sir Harry Parkes, the British Envoy, and on Captain Stanhope of our Navy. All the Navies—or what there were of them—had landed men at Hiogo, fortifications had been thrown up, and Sir Harry Parkes had ordered the seizure of all the Japanese junks, trading vessels, and steamers, the latter having their machinery disabled. But the Mikado sent high officials to apologise, and in a few days the whole affair was amicably settled: by some of the Tycoon's men committing Hari-Kari.

The following year we again embarked Sir Harry

Keppel and also a friend of mine, Charlie Scott, who later on inherited Rotherfield, near Alton, from his brother. The object of this trip was to visit the Island of Quelpart; its capital a curious, old-walled town with thatched houses and streets of incredible filth and nastiness. The inhabitants are Koreans. I believe there were strict orders from the Home Government that nothing should be done to arouse Russian suspicion as to the object of our visit. From there we went to Port Hamilton, a magnificent harbour then going a begging. But we left hurriedly, in terror—as usual—of incurring the displeasure of St. Petersburg, by which it can be seen that vacillation and truckling to foreigners is no new policy for British statesmen. After getting rid of the Admiral and our other guests we resumed our work in the Inland Sea, and, one beautiful morning, steamed into an unknown gulf of great extent, its name now forgotten. Narrow, canoe-like boats were dotted all over the water, in each boat two persons, a man and a woman, the man paddling gently, the woman standing up in the stern of the boat, with no covering but a narrow strip of linen round the waist, in which was stuck a long sharp knife. Scores of such women were swimming about amongst the boats, some holding on to the gunwale to rest, others climbing into their boat and paddling away to some other spot in the gulf. Every now and then we would see a flash in the sunlight, a woman's white and shining form curving gracefully through the air, to disappear in the blue water, here about twenty fathoms deep. We tried to time them, and came to the conclusion that some of them would remain between two and three minutes under water before returning to the surface, when they would reappear with a large cuttle fish in one hand and their sharp curved knive in the other. It is an extremely dangerous business, and many women never

come to the surface again, being caught by the tentaculæ of the fish and drowned. A peculiarity in these women was that many had lost one breast, some even both, the scars of wounds or of a rough and ready operation clearly visible. We were given to understand by our interpreter—who always came with us in the ship—that this gulf is infested by a water demon who attacks men in preference to women. Hence the men rarely or never dive. But if this demon attacks a woman she promptly shears away her own breast and leaves it to be devoured by the monster. But searching for a reasonable explanation of this mutilation I thought that, as the sea-bottom in this part is full of rocks, the women, in plunging, may graze their breasts against them.

Wild animals were still numerous in Japan, the mountains—even near towns—being inhabited by bears and wolves. On one occasion, with two of my messmates—Haslewood and Bawden—I made an excursion to Arïma, where the finest Chinese ink is manufactured from the burnt ashes of the bamboo. It is a day's march from Hiogo. On our way back, Haslewood—who was in advance of Bawden and myself—turning a corner in the mountain path found himself face to face with two large bears drinking water in a pool. The animals appear to have been quite as much surprised as he was; they looked at him for a moment, and then trotted off. Our servants carrying our guns were some way behind, and Haslewood had only a revolver with him, but, with sailor-like indifference to risk, he opened a raking fire on the hindquarters of the animals, which had the effect of sending them lumbering off double quick, bolting up a small mound about a hundred yards off, when, getting the other side of it, they turned round and peered at us over the top of it, with just their heads showing. By this time Bawden and I had arrived on the scene, and if I

remember right we all three opened fire, but apparently without doing the bears any harm. We then rushed up the mound, but where the beasts had gone is a mystery: for, though there was nothing but rock and sand to be seen, they had entirely disappeared. Their cave must have been close by, though we could not discover it. Haslewood measured one of their footprints: it was eight inches across, but whether this is large or small for a bear I do not know.

I had another bear adventure—in a remote part of Japan—which might well have ended differently. I was alone—shooting pheasants—and was forcing my way down a thickly wooded gorge, when close to me I heard a scuffling in the underwood and a squeaking, which I took to be boar. Suddenly out rushed two small dark beasts, almost at my feet, and, still thinking it must be boar, I fired and rolled over one, though only loaded with No. 5 shot. Then, to my sorrow, I saw it was a little fluffy baby bear. I leant over it; it looked up in my face, gave a litle sigh, stretched itself out, and lay dead. I was indescribably sorry, but had not much time for indulging in contrition when a crashing noise, not twenty yards off, heralded the approach of some big beast. I instantly guessed it must be the mother, and, knowing well what the wrath of such an animal can be if harm is done to its offspring, I dashed into the thick cover and up into a tree, not in the least knowing if the bear could climb or not. Here I witnessed a piteous scene, and, if ever any animal wept, surely that poor mother bear shed tears. She smelt her poor little cub all over, turned it gently with her paw, licked the wound and then the face and eyes, shaking her head all the time from side to side in mute misery. She sat down by its side and seemed to think. Then—all of a sudden—she sprang up, sniffed the ground, and must have smelt my track, for, with a fierce

roar, she darted off up the gorge in the direction from which I had originally come. I was thankful to see her clear out, and let her get away a good distance before coming out of my tree, and when I did I made the best of my way in the opposite direction. I saw no more of her, and wondered if she had found the other cub, and hesitated whether or not to go back for the dead one. But I heard the mother growling hoarsely up the gorge, and, having only small shot with me, thought it wiser to leave her and her cubs alone.

We visited a place called Fukuoka, the capital of Tchikugen, a fine, well-built town, noted for the stature of its men and beauty of its women. In no other part of Japan did we see either men or women of more stately manners or dignity of bearing, whilst they averaged considerably taller than the inhabitants elsewhere. The tea-houses here were on an especially sumptuous scale, and the Geishas as remarkable for their looks as for their amiability. It was the Paphos of the Far East. The Ushiwara, an institution in all Japanese towns, was on a particularly fine scale. It is a large space containing, perhaps, from fifty to one hundred tea-houses, according to the size of the town, and is surrounded by a high straw or bamboo fence (hence, I believe, the name). At the entrance gate you receive a ticket, entitling you to entertainment of the class to which your payment corresponds, from tea-houses of the most select, almost extravagant luxury, down to such humble resorts as suit the requirements of junkmen and coolies. The attendant Moosmés are, of course, in like categories, ranging from extreme youth and beauty to withered crones: from well-bred city damsels to country bumpkins. Music, dancing, playing forfeits, and drinking of hot saki—which in time becomes palatable though disagreeable at first—are the diversions offered in all alike. It is also by no

means uncommon in an Ushiwara to come across a drunken Yakonin—the private soldier of the Samourai class—a dangerous person in his cups ; and Ronins, also, that is, men who have voluntarily surrendered allegiance to, or no longer seek the protection of their Daimio ; bent on some personal errand of revenge ; their lives becoming forfeit to any one who likes to kill them. Wearing a peculiar kind of basket helmet, which completely hides their features, these Ronins wander all over Japan, perhaps for years and years, before finally accomplishing the end they have in view.

I think one of the most striking peculiarities of the Japanese is their irrepressible mirthfulness. From the highest to the lowest the Japanese seem ever ready to make merry, a feast on every imaginable occasion, and always graced by the presence of the Geisha, a woman trained in all the art of making herself agreeable. True Geishas occupy a unique position in the world of to-day as they have done for centuries behind us. They are not the Greek hetyra, nor the Roman slave girl trained to delight the guests of an Imperial feast, nor have they anything in common with Nautch girls, and are as far removed from the *habituées* of a music-hall promenade or the Moulin Rouge as is a symphony of Beethoven from a cake-walk. With exquisite grace and charming manners, the Geisha is often a well-read woman and an admirable comic *raconteuse ;* singing, dancing, and playing her samisen as easily as she breathes ; whilst the ridiculous waddle to which we are treated in London theatres as representing their ordinary gait resembles nothing ever seen in Japan. The generally accepted idea in the West that "Geisha" corresponds to *demi-mondaine* is entirely erroneous. It is true that the Japanese *demi-mondaine*—of the seaports and towns where Europeans congregate—have adopted the name,

but the high-class Geishas are as respectable as any class of women in the world. This statement appears all the more astounding when one discovers that they are trained in the Ushiwara before described. But there are many puzzling things in Japan and this is one of them. Many a Geisha has married into the highest nobility, and the blood of the semi-divine Tenshi, the Mikado, is itself by no means free of such an admixture. Of Japanese music we very soon heard more than we wanted. I am told there is some rhythm in their Gaku, but I suppose my ear was not sufficiently acute to detect it, much as I love music—of our sort. Stringed instruments are those chiefly in use in Japan, accompanying most discordant singing, and it always struck me that all the musical sounds sought after might be produced with much less trouble and in one operation—by simply hauling the gut out of a live cat.

On returning from one of our summer cruises in the Inland Sea, our unfortunate little Skipper was discovered by the medical pundits at Yokohama to be seriously ill, so much so that he was at once ordered home, and Sir Harry Keppel very kindly gave me the acting command of the *Sylvia*, whereas by all precedent, and quite fairly, as far as I was concerned, he might have conferred it on Rose, his Flag-Lieutenant. However, he thought it best not to put an entire stranger into the ship who had no knowledge of the ways of the surveying service. I remained in command until superseded by Captain St. John.

The commission from that time was entirely uneventful, and after our four years were up we were paid off in Hongkong, and I was sent home in charge of time-expired men in a fine old sailing ship chartered by the Government. It was not an interesting voyage, and beyond my being compelled to confine the master of the

ship to his cabin and keep him prisoner until we reached England, nothing broke its monotony.

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Arrived in England I was free to do as I liked, and remained on half-pay for some time, spending most of it in Florence, my father having drifted out to the congenial atmosphere of Italy—my poor mother a confirmed invalid.

I saw a good deal of Italian Society—for my father's cousin had married Della Marmora, the well-known Italian General — at that time Prime Minister — and we had, of course, very many friends of the old days. The Court was then still in Florence and I was presented to Victor Emanuel, and on several occasions afterwards had conversation with this great King. He was a man who impressed one greatly. His force of character was patent to the least observant, and his personal appearance was not less remarkable. Many human beings seem to typify some animal: Victor Emanuel suggested a wild boar; in fact, I never saw a man or woman with animal propensities so plainly indicated, his passionate nature stamped on every line of his face. He stood amongst his Ministers and Staff with a stolid defiant look that no one could misunderstand. He would have gripped the biggest and stoutest man alive by the throat and would have died in a death struggle. He was a man of resolute belief in himself, of sound common-sense, but no high intellect. He was remarkably ugly, with deep-set eyes; very short and of immense girth. He had a pleasant smile when he chose, and his grip of your hand—like putting it in a carpenter's vice and turning on the screw slowly—was extremely characteristic.

Florence was delightfully gay at that time, and balls at the Pitti Palace, at the Strozzi, and other great houses

were frequent. There was a large English Society as well: amongst them the present Lady Colin Campbell, then a quite young and beautiful girl, who, with her father and sister, lived in our hotel.

But I had very soon to go to sea again, for what little I had saved in China went like smoke in these surroundings, as may be imagined, and I got appointed to the *Caledonia*—a masted ironclad of a type long ago obsolete—then stationed in the Channel Fleet. We were not long in the Channel, however, before we were ordered to the Mediterranean. Here, the most interesting thing that occurred to me was being selected to excavate and bring away the remains of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. It was a heavy and tedious business: the German Government gratuitously thrusting its nose into the affair through the personal spite and jealousy of some rival excavator, who felt exasperated at any one finding anything that could not be lugged off to Berlin. Of course the German pose—that these valuable relics should remain in Turkey and be sent to Constantinople—was purely dog in the manger, but whilst the Powers were wrangling over it, and though I had received a positive order from the Pasha of Smyrna that the work must not go on, I worked away all I knew, replying to the Pasha, that I could only take orders from Captain Stanhope of the *Caledonia*, who naturally gave me none. With much difficulty, owing to their great size—many of them fourteen tons weight—the remains of this wondrous temple were finally hoisted on board the *Caledonia*, when the ship immediately sailed. I believe a few hours after we had left the long-delayed Firman came from the Sultan forbidding them to be removed. But it was too late, and they are now safe in the British Museum.

The neighbourhood of Ayasolook (Ephesus) was in its

normal state of occupation by brigands. I had gone out shooting one day, accompanied by a Greek who spoke some English, and when returning to camp, over bare and rocky hills, I noticed some men lurking about below us in a way I thought suspicious, dodging first one side of the path then the other. My Greek quickly spied them, too, and pulled me up.

"Those are brigand man," he said. "Zebecks and bad Greeks: think want take *you*, sir."

I felt extremely uneasy—though my camp and all my men were not two miles off—and I halted to watch them. With my glasses I could plainly see that they were evidently hiding on both sides of the path, and I felt sure the Greek was right. Evening was falling fast, and I knew that I might fire fifty shots and no one in the camp would take any notice of it, for men were shooting all day long amongst these hills. I stopped to think. To return across the hills to a village some five miles off was out of the question: for the inhabitants were quite as likely to be brigands as the fellows on the path. At last I determined to settle affairs my own way: and as two of the brigands were conspicuously in sight, I left the path and crawled down the hill to get nearer, making the Greek go in front of me, fearing treachery on his part. I got within about three hundred yards of the men, who had not noticed that we had left the track, and, resting my rifle, took a steady aim at the rock immediately above their heads. The ball struck the rock fair, and I saw them both spring up bewildered, eagerly looking up to see whence came the shot. I crammed in another cartridge and again let fly in their direction, when they turned and bolted, and, in a moment or two, I saw the other three jump up and run off as well. I loaded and fired at random after them as quickly as I could until I lost sight of them amongst the olive-trees below.

"Zebeck no come back, sir," said my Greek. "He no stop now."

So we continued our journey and got into camp with no further adventure, nor did I ever hear anything more about it.

* * * * *

On returning to Malta we found an epidemic of small-pox raging. Nearly every one in the Fleet was re-vaccinated: but Captain Stanhope—either an unbeliever in vaccination or indifferent to it—refused to have it done. I do not think we lost a single man, though great numbers had the disease: but poor Stanhope died of it. I caught sight of his face as he was being carried over the side in a cot to go to the hospital. I shall never forget it: his features were already almost obliterated, in the frightful confluent form of the malady.

I started a studio ashore, and took to painting in oils; poor rubbish it was too. Moreover, the basement under my studio contained—as I afterwards discovered—an open pipe connected with the sewer or cess pit, and I got typhoid fever; and growing seriously ill was sent to the Naval Hospital where I lay for several weeks at the point of death. In the next bed to me, also practically dying, was Lord Walter Kerr, his mother, the Marchioness of Lothian, having come out to nurse him. He got better: I got worse. One night in a semi-conscious state I heard the doctor say to my nurse, "All right; his bed will be vacant for the man coming in to-morrow; he can't live through the night."

I recall distinctly that hearing this did not in the least distress me, for I was so weak I did not care one way or the other. But I turned the corner in the night, to the surprise of the doctor who told me so himself, and only a few days after I was sitting in the sun out in the

hospital garden, a bare kind of place with straight gravel paths. I remember to this day watching a long string of black ants crossing and recrossing the path, all apparently in vigorous health and contrasting their activity and eagerness with my helplessness and lassitude. It seemed odd to think that these creatures had been busy and thriving all the weeks I had been lying up there in the big white hospital. I saw them bringing in dead flies; so I amused myself catching as many as I could reach, and put them on their track, when the greatest excitement followed, one carcase after another being hauled away and disappearing down a hole across the path. Then it struck me that perhaps the flies might think it unfair, and that the ants ought to hunt for themselves: so I discontinued supplying my black friends.

At last came the time when I was strong enough to be lifted into a cot and carried on board a P. and O. bound for England. My recovery was most rapid, and before the Sierra Nevada and the coast of Spain rose in view I was feeling almost well again. Fortunately for me I found on board some friends of mine—the Kings—who I had known well in Malta, and no one could have been kinder to me than they were.

Having been invalided home a generous Government put me on half-pay, five shillings a day—to recover, as best I could, on that fattening sum. Had I been in the Army, with a sore toe, I should have been given a year's sick leave on full pay—after going before a Medical Board, and after that I should have got another six months, but the Navy had no plums of this sort—kicks more plentiful than ha'pence: and if a man's health broke down—so much the worse for him—he had to grub along as best he could.

Though I had really nothing seriously the matter with me, still it took me a long time to recover from the

effects of that deadly fever which carries off so many and injures for life so many more.

It was fortunate for me that I had a sister in England at this time, home from India, and herself in indifferent health, so we foregathered and went off to a charming place, Cluny, near Forres, in Morayshire, and thus—by the merest chance—altered the whole plan of my life. For here, staying in the same house, I met her who became my wife—Catherine Murdoch Wilson. She was Scotch of the Scotch, and I doubt if there was ever an admixture of any other blood in her veins. Her father—who had been in business—owned a small property in Stirlingshire, called Calliambae, the chief interest in it being the fact that Calliambae was the Gaelic form of Columba, and that the place was called after the great saint of that name, who lived there before going to settle in Iona—about the middle of the sixth century.

In the following spring we were married, and whilst waiting for some better employment I served in the *Asia* at Portsmouth, the Earl of Clanwilliam my Captain. Then the Childers' retirement scheme came out, and I accepted it. I pass over two or three years of my life now, for though full of incidents their interest is entirely personal to us. We travelled on the Continent, and, by a curious coincidence, our first child—a daughter—was born in the room where my mother had died and on my mother's birthday—St. Valentine's day.

Eventually we returned to Scotland, and, hunting about for a house to live in—with some vague idea of adopting literature as a career—we stumbled on a charming little place called Gifford Vale, near Yester, in Haddingtonshire. Our nearest neighbour was the very redoubtable old Marquis of Tweeddale—a man of whom many queer tales were told. On one occasion he met a gipsy on the road who refused to draw his cart out of his way to allow the

Marquis to pass—not knowing who he was. Lord Tweeddale jumped off his horse and went up to do something violent—after his fashion—when the man said, "No, I won't fight you. I am Sam "—something—" and I don't want to hurt you."

"I know all about you," said the Marquis—as he well did—for this Sam was the champion heavy-weight of Scotland, "but come on."

They fought a great many rounds, and at last the Marquis gave Mr. Sam a finishing blow, which staggered him. Then, as Sam sat on the ground, he looked up at the Marquis and said—

"Well! I didn't think there was a man in Scotland could serve me like that—unless it was old Bill Hay"—or "John Hay"—I forget the Marquis's Christian name.

"That's exactly who it is has thrashed you," said the Marquis.

"Then I don't mind," said Sam; "for I have always heard say he is the best man north of the Tweed."

We had Gifford Vale extremely cheap; but when I took it I was told we should not remain in it long—no one did—as it was haunted. Some hideous person who had committed a murder in it was supposed to haunt the kitchen, and amuse himself by grinning in at the lower windows. Also a woman in a silk dress went up and down the stairs—but neither my wife nor I ever saw either of these ghostly visitants. But the servants did—or said they did—which is the same thing—as no one can contradict a statement except on other evidence. But whatever was the matter with the house, we gradually got a horror of it and left it in six months, migrating to the Bridge of Allan, where our son—who perished in the collision between the *Victoria* and *Camperdown*—was born.

CHAPTER XXIII

RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

Go to Turkey as naval correspondent—Hobart Pasha: his incompetence—Freeman the historian—Gallenga—Suleiman Pasha, murderer of Abdul Aziz—Plot to restore Murad V. to the throne—Woods Pasha, K.C.B.—Abdul Hamid—Midhat Pasha.

WE had not been long on the Allan when I unexpectedly received an offer from the *Times* to go to the seat of the Russo-Turkish War as naval correspondent. For that newspaper—in common with every one in and out of the British Kingdom—expected that, as an Englishman—Hobart Pasha—had been for years the virtual Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Navy, and had been specially appointed to that influential post through the action of the British Government, the Turkish Fleet would be a weighty factor in the great struggle.

How absolutely futile were any such hopes is now ancient history, and as Hobart is long since dead it is unnecessary to drag his frailties from their dread abode. Suffice it to say, his incompetence and complete failure to recognise the enormously important part he had been called on to play in the history of Europe, produced their natural result, and that the Turkish Fleet, in the hour of need, proved not only totally unfit for sea work and

maritime fighting, but was the immediate cause of the invasion of Turkey—across the Danube—by the Russian Armies.

There were several other correspondents in the steamer between Trieste and Constantinople in which I travelled, and amongst the passengers one of such retiring, unassuming manners that a rowdy American—going out for some New York paper—was generally pointedly rude to him, and got up the story that he was a linen draper or a photographer. However, whatever he was any one's opinion of him seemed to concern him very little, and it was quite evident he had not the least wish to make our acquaintance. He was Lord Melgund, now the Earl of Minto and Viceroy of India, and it was amusing to see how one by one our clique began to discover what a charming man he was, headed by the aforesaid Yankee—who literally grovelled before him, and would have done any menial service for him—when we accidentally discovered who he was, through his telling me that he was a friend of my brother Claude, with whom he had campaigned in Afghanistan. I have often made mistakes like this in life—notably when once I took the Duke of Somerset—then First Lord of the Admiralty—for the dockyard rat-catcher. The Duke had strolled on board my ship, the *Sylvia*—then in dock—during the men's dinner hour, and came up and asked me to say he wished to see the Captain.

"Nonsense!" I said. "You can't see the Captain about your job—be off."

He remained quite undisturbed, and said, "Will you kindly inform him that the Duke of Somerset wishes to see him."

Then I saw he was not a rat-catcher.

Mr. Freeman, the historian, and his daughter—afterwards Mrs. Arthur Evans—had also taken a passage in

the steamer, and had embarked in the evening. But they suddenly disembarked just before we sailed.

My *début* in Constantinople as regards my newspaper was anything but pleasant, for I had received a mysterious hint—tantamount to an order to act on it—from my long-time, valued friend, Mr. MacDonald, the manager of the *Times*, that the paper was extremely displeased with its Constantinople correspondent, Mr. Gallenga, who had made himself very objectionable to the British Ambassador, and that I was, more or less, expected to take the work temporarily out of his hands. It may be imagined that this was no easy matter, and when I endeavoured, in the most delicate way in the world, to suggest this to Gallenga, that irascible Italian flew into a great rage and asked me on what authority I was acting. Practically I had none. So I left the matter to boil itself out, and soon after another man came out—Austen—and officially superseded him, leaving me to go about my special business in naval matters.

I now turned my attention to the Fleet, and, fortunately, found a most valuable assistant in my inquiries in the person of the present Sir Henry Woods Pasha, then holding some very subordinate post in the Imperial Dockyard, though practically doing all the work. I believe if it had not been for Woods the entire Naval Service of Turkey would have collapsed, and I also believe if he had had his way really great things might have been done. But that incompetent man, Hobart, though perfectly willing to leave all the work in Woods's hands, was jealous of him, and, with the Minister of Marine, equally jealous, between them this active, intelligent young man found all his efforts constantly thwarted.

However, all this, too, is ancient history—though

extremely interesting as indirectly moulding, not only the then history of Turkey, but of far-reaching consequences in things as yet unborn.

They were stirring times in Constantinople at that time. Abdul Aziz had been murdered by Suleiman Pasha—there is now little doubt of that fact—and Murad, his successor, a weak, self-indulgent *débauché*, having been driven from his throne with the virtual consent of all the European Powers, had been succeeded by Abdul Hamid, the present Sultan.

It would be impossible in a brief space to give any idea of the complication of affairs and of the political intrigues as they presented themselves in Constantinople from the year 1876 to the end of the war. No kaleidoscope or the laws of prisms could effect more startling changes in form and colour than were to be witnessed in the grouping of persons and parties in that distracted Empire, and, unfortunately for England, after the splendid pre-eminence, amongst all Ambassadors to the Porte, of Stratford de Redcliffe, a succession of weak men had represented England, so that—already by that time—this country had become a *quantité negligiable* in Oriental politics.

It is true we recovered ground for a brief time under Lord Beaconsfield—but what he succeeded in doing when the Russians were practically masters of Constantinople, was literally done in spite of our Ambassador, and by no means through his influence. But to return to my narrative.

I had not been many days in Pera before I began to understand some of the complications about me—for I went about everywhere I could, and owed a great deal to Woods and to the clever family, the Whittals, into which he had married, but more especially to a very old friend of mine, Wrench, our Consul. Amongst

others I made an acquaintance for which I was indebted to an extremely interesting and curious experience. This was a lady, Madame ——, but whose name—as the sequel will show—it is impossible for me to give.

To this lady I was indebted for all kinds of mysterious information which could only have emanated from some one thoroughly behind the scenes, and, what is more, I found out from other sources that it was generally entirely to be relied on, though, unfortunately, always tainted by violent partisanship which made it useless—if not dangerous—to employ.

Her husband—who never appeared on the scene—had once occupied an important post, but had fallen from his high estate, and ill-natured people said the lady lived by her wits—no mean outfit for any one, however—for she was one of the cleverest women I ever met; in fact, admittedly the cleverest woman in the East, with the additional advantage of most remarkable beauty and charm—though much of it was gone when I knew her.

We became great friends, and it was not long before I saw that she had some object in her attention to me that was of great importance to her. After a time, out it came: and sufficiently startling it was.

She was manœuvring one of the innumerable plots then going on to dethrone Abdul Hamid and reinstate Murad V.

At first I hardly grasped the enormous significance of such an enterprise, and certainly had not the faintest glimmer in my mind of the forces on all sides which this brilliant and audacious woman determined to set in motion. My own powerlessness to engineer so stupendous an affair seemed to me beyond all doubt, but Madame —— thought otherwise, and gradually opened

up to me her ideas of the means at our disposal. The first things that dawned on me were the vast sums of money at her command: the extraordinary ramifications of her plot: the infinite number of persons—all of the highest official position, including persons in the immediate *entourage* of Abdul Hamid—who were already involved in the matter. Gradually, too, was opened before me a network of Embassy intrigues, of all the Powers, in which historic names were mentioned, with letters of most compromising nature, written by all manner of often unsuspecting people, or notes of invitation, and messages on scraps of paper, which were made to synchronise with certain events and the sayings and doings of certain people, written by ladies, wives, sisters, cousins, of Ambassadors, by *attachés* and secretaries of Embassies, with prodigious piles of reports and memoranda from spies of every nationality. The labyrinth was simply amazing.

Then—over and above all this—was a picture drawn to me of the most dazzling description of my own self-interest in it—and I was at once offered a very large sum of money if I would embark in the enterprise. And what support was I to give? I must remind the reader that in those days—and even long after—the *Times* was the greatest influence in the whole world of European politics, and that what the *Times* said one day the world believed and acted on the next. I can only say that I had personal experience of this myself: for some of the most far-reaching consequences have followed on my own initiative through the columns of that once mighty organ.

I was to take up Murad's cause—at first very gradually—but the chief thing was to start it. I was to endeavour to follow a new policy as regards the Eastern Question.

And here I may casually mention that that identical policy has been and is still being carried out in the East. I cannot here describe it in its entirety, but suffice it to say that it involved the hegemony of the Balkan Provinces and the gradual withdrawal of British influence in the Near East.

To coach me up in this complicated and multifarious question Madame —— spared neither time nor lost opportunity, the great point being with her to persuade me that Murad was no more mad, no more a drunkard, and no more unfit to reign than dozens of Sultans who had sat on the Ottoman throne. She drew a most masterly picture of the other side of the question, namely, of the character of the present Sultan, and I am bound to say that after all these years and all the strange vicissitudes through which he has gone, I am amazed at her prescience. Short of prophecy I know nothing to be compared to the extraordinary perspicacity of this woman. A certain British Ambassador had had penetration enough to discover and utilise her wonderful genius for intrigue.

It may be easily imagined that this affair gave me much food for thought, for under her influence I began to believe that her version of Murad, and her view of British interests were correct. Of the former I have my doubts; of the latter I have none. But the most interesting of the strings she wished me to pull in this affair she had not yet put in my hands, though after a few days I had hold of it. This was a personal interview with the Valideh Sultan, the mother of Murad, and it came off in due time.

On an appointed night I went to Madame ——'s house: there was a small strip of a garden at the back which communicated with another house in another street, the bottom of which went almost down to the Bosphorus. It

was an ideal place for conducting a conspiracy. Madame ——'s daughter ushered me in and told me that there was no one in except her mother, and I went upstairs and was shown into a back drawing-room, when in a short time I heard a carriage drive up and two Turkish ladies wearing, of course, their yashmaks, and accompanied by Madame ——, made their appearance. I could see by their manner they were extremely nervous, and they both seemed to cling to Madame —— and talked hurriedly—about what, of course, I am ignorant. Then, whilst this was going on, more footsteps sounded on the stairs and all the women jumped up and bowed low as a tallish, stout woman, with her yashmak partly pulled aside, came into the room. Then at once Madame ——'s daughter and the two other Turkish women retired and we three were left alone. But the new-comer passed by, without taking any notice of me, and, entering the big *salon*, sat down on the divan, when Madame —— took off her guest's slippers, lighted a nargileh and handed it to her with much ceremony. Coffee and sherbet, the invariable adjuncts of a visit in Turkey, were dispensed with: I suppose because there were no servants in the house.

After some earnest talk in tones which again indicated great agitation, Madame —— went to the head of the stairs and listened, came back to the window and carefully shut the venetians, and then beckoned to me to approach the divan. She then said something in Turkish, which I took to be a presentation, and I bowed and stood still and Madame —— said to me—

"This is the Valideh Sultan—the mother of His Majesty Murad V."

Her veil was almost completely off, and I looked down on her face, pale and sad, with a small mouth, on which the blindest could not fail to read grief, and with large,

lustrous dark eyes which stared at me unmoved. I have often seen tragedy queens on the stage, the greatest and most renowned of actresses of the last half-century, but never have I seen a face that bore such traces of emotion and sorrow as this woman's. Nor was it to be surprised at, seeing that she was entrusting her very life and that of her son to a perfect stranger, and he not a follower of the Prophet. Her hands—which were extremely white and stout, the nails crimson—seem to twitch involuntarily, and at last, as she looked, I saw the tears fill her eyes.

She said nothing—nor did I, naturally—not knowing one single word of Turkish appropriate to the occasion, and then at last Madame —— broke the awkward silence and translated for me what the Valideh Sultan said. It was a long protest against all the villainy which had led to the dethronement of her son—in fact, all the story I already knew. She also said that Abdul Aziz had been murdered by Suleiman Pasha—that the story of his suicide was false—that Suleiman had broken into a room near where the Sultan was, and had found a pair of scissors in the work-basket belonging to one of the harem, and had held the Sultan down whilst he, Suleiman, severed the veins of his arm. I have heard this has been contradicted since, but personally I believe it to be true.

The interview, however, did not last long, but its object was attained, which was that I should thoroughly impress on my mind the features of Murad's mother in order that I might be able to identify her at a later stage of the plot. The Imperial lady then rose up, and Madame ——, having first pinned up her yashmak and arranged her ferijeh, escorted her out of the room.

They went downstairs, and, looking out of the window

which gave on the garden at the back, I saw the other two Turkish women waiting for their mistress, when all three, followed by Madame —— and her daughter, who bolted the door after them, crossed the garden and disappeared through the small wooden gate at the end of the path.

Then Madame —— returned to the *salon* and explained to me—far into the night—all the meaning of the interview.

It was arranged that I was to be smuggled across the Bosphorus to the Tcheragan Palace, where Murad was imprisoned, and there I was to have an interview with Murad himself in the presence of the lady I had just seen, and I was to form my own opinion as to whether the deposed Sultan was mad or not. I had been given the privilege of seeing his mother in order that he himself might feel confidence in me as an emissary of Madame ——'s, who had always been on his side.

All this struck me as feasible enough, but I still refused to commit myself definitely to Madame ——'s plan, and said that all I could do was to give the whole matter my most serious consideration. This, of course, she thought quite reasonable, and, accompanying me downstairs, let me out into her dark, narrow street, whispering to me to be careful: for spies were in every direction.

I returned to my apartment, and all that night I sat and thought. I need hardly say I was enormously impressed by the strange scene I had gone through, for I at once dismissed from my mind that the affair was what the Yankees call "gotten up." The whole thing was too real; moreover, there was nothing to be gained by acting such a perilous pantomime, if it were one. These people were clearly playing for a tremendous stake—the greatest stake that can be played in the game of

Fate—life and death. The most potent influences in all the gamut of human nature were the cards they played with, a mother's love to begin with, and infinite self-interest and wealth following in its wake.

All through those long hours I strove with the utmost of my intelligence, to try and see what was best to do consistent with honour. I felt keenly, nay, almost desperately inclined to throw in my lot with the conspirators. What was Abdul Hamid to me? I owed him no loyalty, whilst, on the other hand—having studied all that Midhat had done to regenerate Turkey and knowing that this dark-souled Armenian who had climbed to the throne over his miserable brother's body was the only obstacle to these reforms being carried out—bringing happiness to millions upon millions of people and securing the peace of the world for a long, long time—I felt this world would be well rid of him.

For, naturally, this was no rose-water intrigue, and the people concerned in it were not those to hesitate about removing any obstacle from their path. I was by no means the only person in Constantinople who thought that Turkey would have been better and happier even with a weak-minded man like Murad—though only nominally its head—than left in the clutches of the most merciless, crafty despot that ever sat on the throne of Othman. As to the *Times* if I had any influence with that paper, it was still, of course, extremely light, and I knew that it might be impossible for me to drive in the wedge which was to open up this new policy. But Madame —— did not take that view. She said that the whole question was in a fluid state, and that the stream might easily be diverted into this channel. She had had great experience in these matters.

However, I need not weary the reader with all the pros and cons that weighed in my mind, though I must in

honesty say that self-interest was by no means absent from them. For it will often turn the scale when the balance is even.

But, looking back now, I see that what really decided me was that I had now those at home who depended on me, and that what would have been quite justifiable had I been single was perhaps no longer so. So suddenly, after painful indecision, I determined I would not pursue the venture. Perhaps it was as well, for I might easily have found myself with a knife in my ribs in some dark corner of Galata, or floating gaily down the Bosphorus in a sack, a week after.

Fortunately for me, an outlet of escape was to my hand. Hobart had agreed to take me a cruise round the Black Sea in the Imperial yacht *Retimo*: to leave next day. So early in the morning I called on Madame —— and told her I had determined not to go into the matter any more. She naturally behaved like the woman of the world she was, and made no kind of demur, and we parted the very best of friends, thus closing one of the most curious episodes of my life. The only stipulation she made was that, for her sake and for that of her children, I would keep the matter secret. All this happened more than thirty years ago. The white-veiled woman who I saw vanish through that garden door is dead, and dead, also, is the unhappy prisoner of the Tcheragan, though he lived some thirty years after that, still confined within high walls, but occasionally visited by the brother who had supplanted him. Madame ——, too, is dead. But their plan is still a secret, though widely hinted at. Midhat Pasha, who was directly or indirectly concerned in many of these conspiracies to dethrone Abdul Hamid, is dead, too—died a horrible death, for which there must be a heavy reckoning some day. He was exiled to Taif, a remote place in Arabia,

by order of the man he had placed on the throne—this same Abdul Hamid—where first his eyes were put out, and then he was daily subjected to frightful beatings with sticks, until he succumbed. He was one of the greatest statesmen of the last century.

CHAPTER XXIV

TREASON AND MASSACRE

Hobart's idiosyncrasies—The Black Sea and Danube—Russian gold—Muddle and roguery initiate the war—Abdul Kerim, Serdar Ekrem—A human monster—Abandon naval reporting and take to the Army—Dirty trick of a fellow war correspondent—Circassians and Bashi-bazouks—Massacres—My servant hanged as a spy—Attacked by sheep-dogs.

TO pass from the tragic to the comic, in almost a few minutes, is a common experience in life. Not that my next adventure was purely comic, for behind its absurdity was the tragedy of a betrayed country and the ruin of thousands of homes. However, that is an aspect of the matter that never enters into human calculations. I said Hobart had asked me to take a run with him in the Imperial yacht, the object of the trip being to ascertain if the Russian Fleet was on the move in the Black Sea, which, however, we were all quite well aware was not the fact, as otherwise I do not think we should have gone. In fact, I felt so sure—through information privately obtained through my friends in Pera, who knew everything that was going on in Russia—that the sea was clear, that I was negotiating for the hire of a tug to go out alone and see what ships there were in Sevastopol, Odessa and other Russian ports. But these negotiations for the tug fell through by reason of the

monstrous cupidity displayed by Hobart, through whom I could alone procure coal for my tug, that article being a contraband of war and only obtainable for use in the Black Sea through the department of the Admiralty under Hobart. I believe it would have cost him twenty to twenty-five shillings a ton; people behind the scenes said it would cost him nothing, and he wished the *Times* to pay £5 a ton. I felt this was too much even for the resources of my newspaper, and declined. So thus it came about that I went with Hobart, and, knowing what to expect at his table, I took the precaution of sending some very good claret on board for our joint messing, which, if I remember right, was to cost me £2 a day. We got under way in the evening, stopped for the night off Khandăli, where Hobart lived, and were out of the Bosphorus early in the morning. At our midday breakfast Hobart's steward gave me some execrable claret —absolutely poisonous—and I naturally requested him to bring me some of my own.

"Oh!" said the man, with a gentle chuckle and talking excellent French, "His Excellency the Pasha ordered me to take your three cases up to his house last night and bring off this."

Of course I could say nothing, except that I told Hobart I preferred my own wine.

We got across the Black Sea without adventure and no greater danger than having to drink Hobart's wine. The state of the yacht was typical of the whole Turkish fleet. The stench between decks was beyond belief, and the general filth of the ship, from stem to stern, staggering. But the most astonishing part of the whole affair was the little respect in which the crew evidently held Hobart himself. To me—to whom an admiral was a demi-god—it was not only incredible, but painful. But it was some time before I discovered that he was little better than a

charlatan, and for some days, like many others, took him at his own valuation. But later I quite understood why, when he came to England after the war, Lord Beaconsfield declined to see him. Of his personal courage, however, there never was a doubt, and somehow he always managed to convey the idea that he was a first-class sailor—of the old type, Benbow, Drake, Dundonald, rolled into one—whereas in reality he was nothing but a windbag, and the worst administrator in the Turkish Service.

I next found myself up the Danube, or rather at its mouth, at Sulina, and here the hopeless condition of the Turkish Navy was still more painfully in evidence. Two or three of their ships managed to get blown up, whilst the Russian armies crossed the great river in perfect security and unmolested. I have not a doubt in my mind there was treachery here—in fact the Turkish Commander-in-Chief—a huge, ponderous, old monster, who could not rise off the ground without two or three men to lift him on to his feet, and who was reported to eat a whole sheep of the small Balkan breed every day—openly admitted that his strategy was to allow the Russians to cross the river, and then cut their line of communication behind them. There was only one thing got across the Danube easier than Russian troops, and that was Russian money.

And now another comical war incident occurred. A Turkish man-of-war, the *Luftigelil*, blew up; a Russian officer, by name Romanoff, claiming the distinction of having fired the shell which destroyed her. He hurried back to St. Petersburg and was decorated by the Czar's own Imperial hand. As a matter of fact, the ship had been withdrawn miles out of range of any possible Russian gun two days before. The evidence of the Turkish captain and the survivors, though *naïve*, was quite beyond refutation. The ship's magazine door was open and some of the ammunition was being restowed: the crew so

employed were smoking cigarettes and going about with naked lights.

The incompetence of the Turkish General was beyond belief. The Danube at its mouth splits into numbers of channels, and receives into its bosom three large rivers, the Jalomnitza, the Sereth, and the Pruth. At Turtukai, opposite Oltenitza, there is an island which practically defends the river and bars its passage. This was pointed out to the aforesaid monster, the Serdar Ekrem, and he was begged to place guns on it. He requested to be shown a map, when, after infinite labour on the part of his staff and his English military adviser, he learnt for the first time what the Danube meant. He took three days to think over it, after which he delivered himself of this profound decision—

"What is the use of bothering ourselves about such a little piece of land? Surely our Empire is big enough for us not to care for a mile or two of mud!"

His idea was that it was merely to retain the island itself for the Empire that guns were to be placed on it. Soon after this it became one of Russia's chief stepping-stones across the Danube.

But I could multiply similar incidents to weariness; and it must be remembered I am not writing a history of the war. There is one story, however—actually official—too funny to omit.

This ludicrous Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Armies, Abdul Kerim, was also Admiral of the Danube and Coast Fleet, and, from his safe position in the fortress of Shumla, would issue edicts of detail after the manner—as he supposed—of the great Napoleon. Of course, he frequently went wrong. He elected once to decide that a certain gunboat on the Danube would be all the better for an Armstrong gun, although already her decks were so crammed up that there was no room to move. He

wired to Tophanié—the Arsenal at Constantinople—for the gun to be dispatched to Varna, from whence, with enormous difficulty, it was sent by rail to Rustchuck, on the Danube, where the Serdar had ordered the gunboat to wait for it. When the gun got there the gunboat had been ordered off to Tultcha, on the Lower Danube, miles below any of the Russian positions which this precious gun had been destined to destroy. So back went the gun to Varna, where it was shipped on board a man-of-war and sent to Sulina, to be again transhipped into a small merchant steamer. I happened to go up the river in company with this unhappy piece of artillery, and—when we finally found the gunboat—was amused to see the simplicity with which it was transferred from one deck to another. The process consisted in placing spars between the two ships and dragging it across with ropes. It was a miracle it did not tumble into the river. When they got the thing on board and mounted it on its carriage it was found there were no bolts in the deck strong enough for the recoil, and no port from which it could be fired; for when the gun was run out—in the firing position—the muzzle lay on the port-sill, pointing up into the sky. Months after that this overloaded gunboat found its way back to Constantinople to have the necessary alteration made: and there she lay until the end of the war.

As there was nothing to see I left the Danube and returned to Constantinople, where everything was going on as if there were no war. Intrigue to obtain the posts offering the greatest facility for plunder was the chief—almost the sole—preoccupation of all the officials, especially the post of Minister of War. Hobart was also back again. He could not live out of the atmosphere of Pera: a pack of cards was dearer to him than all the strategy and all the fighting under the sun.

I saw a good deal of Sir Austen Layard, and was

chiefly struck with how much he knew of Babylon and how very little of the Eastern Question. On one occasion, when I was dining at the British Embassy, there was an amusing *fracas* between the Duke of Edinburgh—whose ship was at the Dardanelles—and Hobart. Both had dined rather better than the occasion actually necessitated, and a heated discussion arose between them as to the ineffectiveness of the Turkish Fleet. Hobart got very angry, and twitted the Duke with the equal inactivity of the Russian Fleet. From argument they came to personalities, until Hobart—at all times rather a violent-tempered man—said: "Look here, your Royal Highness, you are an Admiral in the Russian Navy; why don't you go and bring your ships out and show fight, instead of skulking behind the forts of Sevastopol?" It made every one feel very uncomfortable, especially the Duke's cousin, Princess Henry of Reuss, who was amongst the guests.

Meanwhile the Russians were pouring across the Danube practically unhindered, the Serdar Ekrem still keeping his wonderful plan up his sleeve and doing nothing, the Bulgarians now openly in revolt and, in their turn, murdering and ravishing the Turkish population under the protection of their deliverers, the Russians. Things began to look lively, and even amongst the dancing, flirting, intriguing, gambling lot at Therapia—for the Therapia season was in full swing—there were persons who began to look on things with seriousness and alarm. The idea that the Russians would really get within sight of the walls of Constantinople—which, at the beginning of the war, seemed ridiculous—was assuming ugly proportions, especially as the traditional policy of the Powers which, though so widely divergent on other points, had hitherto been considered sound on that of keeping Russia out of the Bosphorus, was known now to

be shaky, and that the actual Turkish Empire itself was being undermined by intrigue in some of the Foreign Embassies: precisely as it is to this day.

But, finding here nothing which concerned my work for the *Times*, and being now convinced that there would be no sea-fighting, I determined to plunge into the war itself, and, telegraphing home that most important events would shortly take place on the Balkans, where the paper was unrepresented, I started off for Adrianople in time to push on with the army under Raouf Pasha, which was to join that of Suleiman Pasha—coming from Albania—to advance on the main Russian army beyond the Balkans.

I at once found myself in the centre of all the horrors of one of the most hideous wars of modern days. In every village there had been massacres and reprisals, and so recent that neither had there been time for man to cover up these sickening sights with the merciful earth, nor for the ravenous dogs and wolves to devour them. Schools burnt, children lying brained or bayonetted amongst their school-books and toys: men and women in a like condition, often half-charred: streets strewn with pillage, churches and mosques still smoking, hordes of Bashi-bazouks, and still more ruffianly Circassian horsemen prowling about searching for loot, regiments of half-starved, bare-footed, ragged soldiers toiling along the roads, mixed up with artillery, and miles of country carts, hordes of half-perished, wholly famished refugees crowding every station, forbidden to enter the trains, and left to starve or trudge off on foot God knows where.

But it is an old, old story this too, and there is nothing new in it, from the records on the burnt-bricks of Nineveh or Babylon, down to our latest newspaper reports. At Tirnova, on the River Maritza, I met a well-known correspondent for the —— ——. He was going the opposite way—that is, back to Constanti-

nople—having organised an admirable system of obtaining news without the slightest personal risk to himself, or any great expense to his employers. If what I learnt soon after was true—and the head of the Imperial Telegraph at Pera swore to me it was—his method was extremely simple. Knowing, for certain, that his paper at that time had no one on the spot I was puzzled to discover how, for some time, this enterprising correspondent could forestall the information which I daily wired—at immense cost and with infinite trouble—to General Eber, our correspondent at Vienna, who transmitted it to Printing House Square by private arrangement. Mr. —— had arranged to tap my messages, to delay mine for twenty-four hours, and wire the contents as his own. Later on, of course, I got up to all these dodges of the wily correspondents, many of them poor, starving creatures, paid only so much a line by their papers, and having to live as best they could, and I did not know at first that this man's way was considered quite fair and smart amongst my *confrères*. After that I used the *Times* cypher, but it is a laborious and crippling process, when you come in from witnessing some great fight, and are hurriedly endeavouring to crystallise into brief and coherent form the tangled reports you received. Another difficulty I had also to contend with was that the aforesaid General at Vienna frequently held views about particular incidents at variance with mine—strategic or political, and that he would garble my message as it pleased him, taking it for granted that a mere sea-faring tyro like myself would submit to it. So I wired to MacDonald that he must stop the Austrian playing the fool with my telegrams or I should come home. The fooling stopped dead.

I remained in Adrianople a few days, a very interesting place, and the second in importance in the Ottoman

Empire. I had time to visit some of its wonders, the Eski Serai—the palace of the Sultans until Constantinople itself fell under their dominion—now a vast ruin, also a magnificent mosque, its minarets with bands of different coloured stone work. There is no more thoroughly oriental city, not even Damascus itself.

It was crowded with refugees and surging with troops. Almost hourly carts were bringing in the victims of massacre or outrage, all Mahommedans, for naturally the Bulgarian population were left to die, or to be eaten by animals as Providence might please. The Vali—Assim Pasha—was particularly anxious I should be able to bear witness that not only were peasants and others who might be supposed to have fought and defended themselves, being bayonetted, but peaceable and harmless people of the better class, and with this object he had me escorted into several of the Turkish harems, amongst them that of Achmet Pasha, where I saw wounded women and children with my own eyes.

I was very busy, organising my own line of communication with Constantinople and preparing for the front, for of course one had to shift for oneself independent of the army. I hired several men, amongst them a cross-breed Greek-Bulgarian, who was to come to me next morning and help pack. My dragoman—Stamos, a Greek—a clever, trustworthy, excellent man—seemed doubtful of this gentleman's fidelity, and came to me, late at night, begging me to get rid of him. However, the question solved itself; for going out next morning almost before it was daylight, I saw in a corner a man standing on his tip toes, as I thought—for he seemed immensely tall—and going up to him recognised my Bulgar-Greek: hanging by his neck from a tripod of strong timber. He had been seized in the night as a Russian spy—which no doubt he was—and with that promptitude

which the Turks displayed on such occasions was forthwith hanged. He looked most unpleasant with his head lolling on one side, and his toes touching the ground. But many such street decorations were to be seen in Adrianople, whilst at the railway station six or seven Bulgars were all hanging on one branch of a small tree. It was not nice to be a Bulgarian just then.

I left Adrianople that day, and got to the station with great difficulty, and after much delay found myself, my horses and my traps, all huddled together in a horse box, which I had been able to secure by bribing the stationmaster. Several very long trains were standing on the rails ready to start, packed tight with hungry, dusty, sweltering soldiers, all in anyhow, artillery, cavalry, infantry, jumbled up together, whilst their arms, horses and piles of ammunition still blocked the platforms, and were to come on after them. The confusion was incredible, and in the midst of it stood the tall, Frenchified General, Raouf Pasha, wringing his hands and issuing orders to which no one attended. On the down side of the station were collected hundreds of starving refugees, an inchoate mass of wailing misery, many wounded and still bleeding, trying to tie up wounds with strips of their own garments torn off anyhow. In a vast number of the cases these unhappy creatures were the survivors of families that had been massacred, so that women stood about without husbands, and numbers of little children wandered in and out of the crowd in a hopeless search for parents who probably lay dead far up country amongst the ruins of their homes. There was no food to give them, and even water was almost unobtainable, nor were they allowed to go off and look for it themselves, being hedged in by a cordon of soldiers, whose bayonets prevented them straying. For the officials were endeavouring to protect

them from the ferocity and brutality of the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians who hovered like obscene birds of prey on their outskirts to see who they could plunder or outrage. Before my train left I saw that many of these unfortunate people had died on the platform, and when a number of railway trucks was finally brought up to take them away to Constantinople many of them were crushed and injured in this final rush for safety. To my dying day I shall never forget the misery and agony of those unhappy, unoffending victims of Russia's brutal, unquenchable thirst for territorial plunder.

It was late at night before my train reached its destination—Eski-Sara, but it was not long, thanks to the indefatigable Stamos, before my camp was all right. But the soldiery, pitchforked out anyhow, were wandering about without arms or supper. The wonder was how well they behaved. The little town itself had recently been in the occupation of a flying column of Russians, who, under Gourko, had crossed the Balkans, but were now falling back before the overwhelming advance of the Turkish Army. Here, too, there were crowds of wounded soldiers and of refugees, men, women, and children, all packed together in trains and in trucks *en route* for Adrianople. It was the same story, and I remember a particularly sad incident, a woman dying in a truck—surrounded by numbers of men and women—having been just delivered of a baby. In the next compartment several soldiers lay dead, and I could not help pondering on this tragedy of life; souls crossing each other on its threshold, time and eternity as it were jostling each other. I went into the town. Ruin and desolation, burnt buildings, piles of garments and of household furniture were on every hand. Patrols of Turkish soldiers were moving up and down the narrow streets, though for what object—as it was too late to

protect life or property—was not discernible. Huge, half-maddened dogs prowled through the bazaars, and with blood-stained jaws fought over human remains. I came near losing my life in a lonely and deserted part of the town, being set on by several of these terrible animals. I got my back against a wall, and with all the desperation which the frightful situation called forth fought the brutes with a stake I managed to pull out of a fence. I knew if they once got hold of me all would be up, and the thought flashed on me that I should certainly die of hydrophobia or blood poisoning if I sustained only the slightest scratch. Just as I was beginning to feel completely worn out a Turkish patrol providentially came round the corner and dispersed my enemies. I felt so shaky after this that I could hardly walk back to camp.

On another visit to the place—some few days later—in rambling about in the outskirts of the town I came across about a dozen men, thirty odd women, and a number of children—all Bulgarians—who, trusting to the protection of the regulars and hoping to get away to places of safety, had crept back to the town from hiding places in the forests, or from remote villages. They were all in the most piteous condition, practically starving, many too weak to rise off the ground where they lay in a sea of mud, for it had been raining incessantly for two days. Another European was with me, and we decided that Raouf Pasha must be at once informed of their presence in order that he might place a guard over them. For that they would be massacred and outraged if any chance Bashi-bazouks or Circassians discovered their whereabouts was quite certain. So my companion rode off to headquarters, and I remained hoping to be able to protect them if by chance they were attacked. I did not feel in the least comfortable in the situation, for I knew that it would not have very much

troubled any of the Circassians or Turks to knock me on the head as well and get rid of me: and that no one would be any the wiser. But I could not desert these poor, despairing people, who thronged round me, beseeching me—as I well knew by their gestures—to save them. I think it must have been three hours before at last we heard the tramp of horses coming along at a gallop, and for a few minutes we were all alike in a state of great alarm as to whether it might not be Circassians, for the road was hidden by a belt of trees. But to our intense relief the first man we saw was my friend, and behind him in another minute a squadron of Turkish Cavalry. Raouf Pasha had acted with great promptitude, and before night-fall these wretched people—having been well fed—were packed off in trucks to Adrianople. Leaving them in charge of my friend and in the safe custody of the regulars, I started back to camp, and was again attacked and followed by dogs, but only by the ordinary bazaar pariah, and not the large sheep-dog breed so formidable in those parts. Still, it was unpleasant, and I was glad when we came across some dead bodies of men, apparently only recently killed, on which my assailants instantly fastened, leaving me in peace.

That night my dragoman had found a little girl of six or seven entirely alone and deserted, and had brought her to our camp. She was a curious, wild little person, and after being washed, re-clothed, and fed up became most fascinating. I seriously thought of sending her home to my wife to adopt her, but wiser counsel prevailed, and instead of that Stamos managed to get her safely transferred to the care of the wife of a well-to-do Greek lawyer in Pera. These people being childless adopted her, and she grew up and was left a large fortune. Strange vicissitude of fate: every possible inquiry was made as to her parents, but nothing was ever discovered

of them, whilst the child did not even know her own name or from what village she came.

About this time, towards the end of July, a strong force—under Raouf Pasha—made a reconnaissance near a place called Geula-Mahalisé, accompanied, of course, by a cloud of Circassian horsemen and Bashi-bazouks.

But when Raouf returned with the regulars to our camp, the irregulars who had remained in and near the town—which was only inhabited by Christians—set to work and massacred all they could lay hands on and looted the whole place, carrying off over a hundred young women, whose subsequent fate was never ascertained. The terrified people fled to the church, a curious building, its floor-level some eight feet below the ground outside, forming a kind of sunk pit. Through the windows the irregulars fired volley after volley until the dead lay in piles huddled against the screen. They then broke open the doors, and, rushing in, finished off any that were moving with their knives. It was simply a repetition of Cawnpore.

Colonel Lennox and Lieut. Chermside, R.E., military attachés, together with Drs. Leslie and Meyrick, of the Aid to the Sick and Wounded Society, entered the place a few hours after and brought out 175 bodies and some eight or ten people in whom some vestiges of life were still left. Outside the church there was a ghastly heap of dead and dying, and even whilst these humane Englishmen were going about the town endeavouring to afford succour, murder and outrage were going on in many parts of it. Indeed, these ruffian irregulars so greatly resented the presence of the English officers, that a Circassian took a deliberate pot shot at Dr. Meyrick from behind a hedge, but fortunately missed him. I was there next day, with others, to try and rescue some of the people who had succeeded in hiding

themselves in cellars, ovens and pigsties. With great difficulty we got some of them to the train—many of them quite insane with terror, and many wee mites of children without parents. We might have discovered a few more in hiding, if we had had time, but evening was coming on and it was necessary for us to get back to headquarters. Moreover, a shameful panic amongst the soldiers, sent as guard for the train, nearly ended in our having to leave behind even those we had rescued. For one of these warriors catching sight of some Bashi-bazouks who had been plundering in a village some way off and mistaking them for Russian scouts, yelled out "Moscoo! Moscoo!"—the name by which the Turks designated the enemy—when every man jack of them who were on the platform and hanging about the station fled precipitately for the train, headed by the officer in command—who, by the way, was more than half-drunk—shouting to the engine-driver to go ahead the instant his foot touched the foot-board. It was with the utmost difficulty that my companion—Scarborough of the *Standard*—and I succeeded in detaining the train for a few minutes whilst we got these wretched people into the horse boxes and luggage trucks: and even then we knew that some had been left behind.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SHIPKA

The beauty of the Tundja Valley—Advance of Suleiman's army—Desolation and ruin—Some types of war correspondents—Rescue of a Bulgarian woman—She disappears in a night attack—Assaults on the Shipka Pass—An invaluable icon.

THE severest fighting during that war—not excepting Plevna itself—took place in the Tundja Valley, which lies between the Greater and Lesser Balkans, having the celebrated Shipka Pass at its western boundary. It is one of the most fertile and picturesque villages in that part of Europe. Never can I forget the striking beauty of the scene when, very early one morning, in the month of August, having ridden ahead of my servants and carts—toiling slowly up the mountain road—I topped the pass and looked down on it, spread below in an exquisite blue mist.

The saffron light of early dawn was slowly spreading over the eastern sky behind the main range, and beginning faintly to illumine the hills opposite, whilst, through the gaps in the mountains, pale bands of light shot across the valley and flashed over the shallow waters of the Tundja River. Under the shadow of the eastern range the uplands and small valleys still lay enshrouded in the folds of night, broad belts of forest above

them adding to the intensity of the gloom with their dark foliage. Here and there some giant oak or weirdly twisted pine, which had gained a foothold on the rocky ridge, stretched its leafless arms in black relief against the morning glory, immovable sentinels over the slumbering scene beneath. Far overhead, where the dawn-tints faded imperceptibly into the deep nocturnal blue, stars still twinkled, and a young crescent moon held on her course. Not a cloud was to be seen in the vast expanse of heaven, where eternal harmony seemed to reign, and a solemn silence, broken only by the bark of some wandering wolf, or the challenging bellow of a great stag—leading his hinds to the grass slopes of the uplands—seemed to rest over the country.

But, alas! how deceptive this appearance of peace and security: for as the light broadened the Ottoman army bivouacked on the slopes on the opposite range gradually appeared, whilst as far as the eye could reach long trains of country carts stretched from east to west, the unyoked cattle lying by the side of them, whilst —a still more painful evidence of what it all meant—columns of smoke could be seen rising in a hundred different spots from burning villages or isolated farms, and right away in the extreme west, even as I watched, columns of fresh smoke began to rise as the retreating Russians set fire to the town of Kezanlik.

I rode down into the valley with a sickening sense of the cruelty and horror of it all—the peaceful, harmless population scattered—every conceivable and inconceivable sorrow and agony accompanying their dispersal—families never to be reunited—children lost for ever. For within the brief space of three weeks a devastating whirlwind of fire and sword had twice swept through that doomed valley, and on each occasion it had been the turn of either one or the other of the two races that occupied it to be

victims of a ferocious extermination. So sudden, too, had been the appearance of the first destroyers—the Cossacks with their Bulgarian allies—that almost the whole Mahommedan population had been slaughtered in their beds, whilst as the tide of war ebbed back and the Russians retreated, the not less bloodthirsty Circassians and Bashi-bazouks made their appearance and it became the turn of the Bulgarian peasantry to suffer. And now, except for fighting men, there was scarcely a thing left alive for hundreds of miles in that part of Thrace save dogs, now grown furious and rabid, prowling about the smoking ruins in quest of their gruesome food, or with their fidelity unshaken still looking for their dead masters, whilst above them chattered and screamed great flocks of kites, vultures and carrion crows, disputing with them for the horrid feast. Every green herb had been blighted, thousands of acres of corn, of maize, of beans, ruthlessly burnt or trodden under foot, and hundreds of miles of rose bushes—the chief industry of the country having been the manufacture of attar of roses—hacked down or uprooted. As silk, too, was a great industry here, mulberries were grown in great quantities, but now their fruit hung in scorched clusters on their withered branches, whilst shrivelled vines, looking like knotted and tangled ropes, seemed to writhe over their broken trellises. Here and there some minaret, which had withstood the raging fire, lifted its blackened form above the ruin of a mosque, and it was painful to see the storks sitting in mournful meditation on the ruin of homes, which from time immemorial had been their sanctuary. With wanton recklessness—similar to the blind insensate folly of the Russian mujik—every rick-yard, cornstack and granary had been burnt, and all the implements of husbandry destroyed. Ploughs, hoes, the great copper stills for making the attar, spinning wheels

and textile looms, crockery and household furniture, everything had been smashed to atoms or piled up and set on fire. No fiends from hell could have produced more utter destruction.

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Later in the day I came across Suleiman Pasha himself, the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish army of the Balkans. He was bivouacked in unostentatious simplicity, and his staff no better provided as to accommodation. He gave me the impression of a man to whom human suffering was entirely indifferent, and I was long enough with him to know that he was nothing but a brute in human form. His career proved that no tie of friendship, no oath of fidelity was binding on him. Any obstacle on his path was remorselessly swept aside—in fact, he was precisely of the same clay out of which many a Roman Emperor was moulded. In form and manner he did not belie his origin, that of a low-born Turk from a back slum of Stamboul—powerfully built, with coarse red hair, small, cunning grey eyes, and a shrill, querulous voice. His closest companions and such friends as he had, never disguised the fact that he was entirely wanting in moral sense. Hanging about his tent was a very handsome young Hungarian, who—at that time—seemed the only human being for whom he had any regard. I knew the man well and frequently obtained information from him, for which he was well paid. One morning—this was later on, when we were under the guns of the Shipka—I missed him, and when I went into Suleiman's tent to ask for him, an aide-de-camp came up and whispered mysteriously that I had better not inquire about the Hungarian as the Pasha had discovered that he was spying for the Russians and had sent him away suddenly. As a matter of fact, the man—by order of the Pasha—had been lugged out of

the Pasha's tent without a moment's warning and shot, and his body buried close by. It had nothing to do with spying, but something totally unconnected with anything either official or military.

In a few days' time two or three other correspondents turned up, and with that singular absence of mistrust of each other—in spite of keen rivalry—which marks the intercourse of war correspondents of a good class, we all chummed up and became great friends. I do not know what it is like now, but I am speaking of things and men as they were nearly thirty years ago, when our numbers were few and the class entirely different from what I believe it to be nowadays. My companions were: Leader, of the *Daily Telegraph*, a high caste, handsome Irishman, a born adventurer, for whom war in any form had an irresistible attraction; Scarborough, double-barrelled for the *Standard* and some provincial paper, an amiable, unassuming man, always ready to share his information with any of us, always with some desperate plan in his head for penetrating the Russian lines in disguise though entirely unfitted for any such enterprise, being ignorant of every language but his own, physically weak, and almost always ill. But he had the heart of a lion, and a better friend never walked. He had no servant, and trusted for what news he could pick up to a ramshackle kind of Jew, who led the poor beast Scarborough bestrode, a broken-down Shumla pony, the colour of a carriage sponge, with flat, sunken nostrils, a pendulous lower lip, above which, forming an acute angle, appeared a few long yellow teeth. There was not another such horse outside a German-sausage shop. For this curious beast Scarborough had paid four medjideh—that is, about seventeen English shillings—and on its back he had placed a huge saddle of Mexican shape, with stirrups to match. As

the saddle was far too large for the horse no tightening of the girths—or rather the strings which did duty for them—could keep the saddle in its place, and it was a daily sight to see Scarborough roll off, saddle and all, and lie under his animal's stomach with all his paraphernalia on the top of him. Not that this was much, for his entire equipment for the campaign consisted of a blanket, a small valise—supposed to contain a spare shirt and another pair of trousers—an ink-bottle, a pen, and a few sheets of paper.

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I now determined to get up with the advanced guard, and accompanied by my two friends we pushed through all the long lines of marching troops, of artillery and cavalry, until we were within six or eight miles of the rear guard of the retreating Russians.

I had bought a magnificent Arab horse, stolen from the stables of some Vali, and worth several hundred pounds. He was a pure Arab of the Nedj, but with great bone and strength. I christened him Bayazid, and parted with him—when I came home—with infinite regret. Trusting to his great speed and endurance I frequently rode close up to the Russian forces, and also made many excursions up the hills on both flanks. I once came across a wolf prowling along in a deep glen and gave him chase. I cannot say how far I chased him—perhaps four or five miles—the brute keeping just ahead of me and preventing me getting a shot at him with my revolver. My horse was going at his top speed all the way over very rough ground, but he never once stumbled or made a mistake. At last the wolf dashed up some rocks where I could not follow him. I then got a shot at him, but missed him, and so gave up the pursuit. I dismounted to give my horse a rest; to my astonishment

he was not in the least blown, and looked as if he could have galloped another twenty miles if necessary.

During our advance I was one day crossing a shallow part of the Tundja—the opposite bank being lined with alder bushes—my dragoman and my carts bringing up the rear. Suddenly a shot was fired amongst the alders, followed by many others, the balls whizzing past us in unpleasant proximity. Then I heard a wild scream, and next moment a woman, in Bulgarian dress, dashed out of the trees and came wading across the stream towards us with all the speed she could, whilst still more shots were fired at her. I spurred my horse towards her and caught hold of her, but in her terror she must have taken me for another foe. She struggled violently—a very tall, muscular woman she was, with a low-type Slav face—but I managed to keep my hold of her, though she nearly pulled me out of my saddle. I saw that one arm was dangling uselessly, and that a stream of blood was coming out of a wound in her side. Meanwhile several Circassians and Bashi-bazouks had rapidly gathered round us, some even endeavouring to drag her out of my grasp, but fortunately Stamos, my dragoman, rushed in and what with belabouring all and sundry right and left with the huge staff he always carried, and by bawling at them in every known language to leave her and me alone, we managed to rescue her and get her back to my araba: into which we hoisted her. But even here she was not safe, for the Circassians were furious at being baulked of their prey and gathered round us in most menacing manner. But Stamos laid about him right valiantly, and more than one of the ruffians went off with a broken skull, and then, just in the nick of time, a Turkish General, Chakir Pasha, came up and put an end to the fray.

He very politely acceded to my request to be allowed to take charge of the woman until I could send her back to the Bulgarian Refuge—organised by Lady Kembal—at Constantinople—in fact, he knew well that he could not trust any guard he himself could place over her. Not so, however, Suleiman Pasha—who a day or two later—having heard of the affair, sent an aide-de-camp to me with a request to deliver up my charge to him, and that he would look after her. As the woman was seriously wounded, and still in a high state of fever after an operation by the English Red Cross surgeon, I declined to do so, and this led to much unpleasantness. The surgeon—who if I remember right was Dr. Leslie—found that she had been fired at point-blank, indeed so close that the flesh of her arm was blown away. The ball had smashed her elbow, had glanced off the elbow-joint into her ribs and lay under the skin under her breast. By the dim light of a solitary candle we gave her chloroform, and then extracted the ball. We made a bed for her in our araba, and she remained under our protection for over three weeks, no opportunity offering itself to send her safely to Constantinople. Being of a very low type of humanity her wounds—like those of an animal—healed very rapidly, and as by this time I had taken up a more or less permanent abode in a small Turkish house on the outskirts of the town of Shipka itself, I made her sleep in a tent outside the verandah, the garden—as is the case with many Turkish houses in Thrace—being surrounded by a very high wall. Here she was quite safe—for Stamos and the others were near at hand—and, above all, as a further protection, a gigantic dog who would have killed any one coming into the enclosure, prowled about there at night. She was a curious, cross-grained, ill-tempered kind of woman, but she showed

most slavish gratitude for what we had done for her, and though her left arm was helpless, she did all she could in return, helping to wash up our dishes and to rub down our horses. Stamos had found her a fresh fit-out of clothes, and had taken away and burnt all her own blood-stained garments, and what with washing herself and doing up her hair she began to look quite presentable in spite of her extraordinarily animal face. Her whole family had been massacred, and, when we saved her, she had been a week hiding in different places and living on maize, or what she could pick up of fruit. And here I may as well record her end—as far as we could ever learn of it. We had shifted our camp to a place higher up in the valley, the woman still with us, when one night there was a great sortie made by the Russians from the Shipka, the first intimation we had of it, volleys of rifle balls and shrapnel whizzing past our tents, whilst we found ourselves surrounded on all sides by a flying mass of Turkish soldiery, cavalry, infantry, and artillery. In a few moments we were on our horses, Stamos putting the Bulgarian woman into our araba, and were off, leaving everything behind us. We got to a narrow part of the road, with a considerable precipice on one side and unclimbable rocks on the other. The rush and crush were terrific, a confused mass of men of all arms, with artillery and cavalry surging through it, every man straining every muscle to get away, some endeavouring to drag the horsemen to the ground in order to seize their horses, others trying to pull the gunners off the limbers—every one for himself. In the middle of this an ammunition wagon blew up and practically blocked the road, but the pressure from behind was so great that guns, horses, and carts were forced over the precipice and went thundering down into the dark. In this frightful scene my araba and, of

course, the Bulgarian woman with it disappeared, and we could never get any tidings of her afterwards, nor of our cart. The sad part of it is that, after all, there was no necessity for this panic, for some Turkish troops had succeeded in getting in between the sortie party and the fugitives, and in a short time we, in the rear, were back again in our camp as if nothing had happened.

* * * * *

By this time the serious siege of the Shipka position had begun, and what might have been a walk-over on the day we arrived at the foot of the Pass, grew into one of the most deadly affairs in modern war. Hecatombs of magnificent Turkish soldiery—amongst the finest troops in the world if properly led—were sacrificed, either through Suleiman's treachery, who, it was almost certain, had received a large sum from Russia to delay his advance a few days—or through the extraordinary lack of military skill this man betrayed as a tactician. As far as I was concerned things were comfortable enough, for I had found a permanent abode, after the *debâcle* described on the last page, in a deserted village, nestled most picturesquely amongst chestnut groves by the side of an icy cold stream, whose spring, only a few yards above us, guaranteed its purity—no slight recommendation in a state of warfare when it was the almost invariable custom to poison every source of water or well by throwing into them dead men, pigs or horses.

The village, which had escaped burning, was just as its inhabitants had left it, but now only occupied by snarling dogs and a large flock of geese, who, with that instinct of coming danger which all of their breed seem to have inherited from their progenitors of the Capitol, flew screaming and cackling before we had even got within gunshot. However, they never left us entirely, and

were a source of most welcome food. I sent several as presents to different friends in the Army and to Suleiman Pasha, who thanked me very graciously for the best dinner he had had since he had left his head-quarters in Albania. Brute as he was in almost every other respect, he was not a glutton—a very rare thing in a Turk. But then he was no more a real Turk than his Armenian master the Sultan.

The scene of confusion in this peaceful little hamlet was heartrending : the courtyards and lanes strewn with clothes and household utensils, beds, bedding, blankets, pots, pans, babies' cradles, plates, dishes, glasses, fur cloaks, silk, thousands of unwound cocoons, women's finery, in fact all the material of life—lying practically uninjured. How the place had escaped the attentions of both Russians and Turks was a mystery, but I may safely say there were hundreds of pounds worth of valuables lying about ready to the hand of the first plunderer that came along.

The house we took possession of commanded a splendid view, standing as it did on a projecting spur of the Balkans. On the slopes opposite broad patches of rye shone as yellow as gold, interspersed with streaks of maize, intensely green, and here and there dark clusters of trees. Above, the ragged crests of the Balkans: below, the valley and the serpentine curves of the Tundja. We were in clover here, for some considerable time, both ourselves and horses finding plenty to eat. As to Bayazid he flourished like a bay-tree, his coat shining like polished brass. He was the most perfect horse I ever saw—gentle, affectionate, high-mettled, speedy, and as handsome as ever left the hand of his Maker.

It was many days before the Ottoman Army got near enough to the Pass to make an assault, but meanwhile, with Leader and Scarborough and a strongish

guard of irregulars, who, without any reference to the General or his staff, we had organised for ourselves, we visited the town of Shipka, which lies at the bottom of the Pass, and was then burning, having been given to the flames as the Russians retired. There was nothing to distinguish its condition from any other town in similar circumstances, beyond that thousands of tons of hay and stacks of unthrashed oats and rye were on fire, whilst within a mile or two an army of unfortunate horses and cattle were practically famishing.

The principal church was also blazing, the flames playing fantastically about the dome and cupolas, the great doors, at the top of an easy flight of broad stairs, standing wide open. Some curiosity impelled me to ride up these steps—for Bayazid could climb like a cat—and looking in through the smoke I saw that the three great doorways leading into the adytum were also open. I rode right into the church, and looked about to see if I could find anything as a memorial of the place, and my eye fell on an icon, which seemed to me of extraordinary beauty. I jumped off my horse and unhooked it, put it under my arm, and rode out again as quickly as possible. I had hardly cleared the building, in fact was still on the steps, when, with a deafening crash, the whole of the roof fell in, sending up a blinding cloud of dust and smoke.

I have that icon still: for, with immense trouble—and having sewn it carefully up in flannel, first packing it with cotton-wool, which I found in a draper's shop, and then in stout canvas—I carried it always attached to my saddle, and so eventually got it home. Several connoisseurs and artists of repute have declared it to be absolutely unique and probably of early Byzantine workmanship. The colour is magnificent, and the drawing somewhat archaic. It represents the "Passing of the Virgin," according to a scroll in some early form of Slav or Russian character.

The Virgin lies dead, but her soul—in the form of a swathed child, like the Bambino—has been caught in the arms of Christ, who stands by the couch surrounded by the twelve Apostles with two acolytes holding candles. Below the couch are two small figures, one an angel with wings, and a drawn sword with which he has chopped off both hands of some evil spirit, which are left lying on the bed, whilst the demon falls backwards to whence he came, with a very unpleasant expression on his face.

* * * * *

I was always warned by Stamos that some fine day I should be robbed of my beloved Bayazid, and his prophecy nearly came true. I had ridden up into a narrow valley which debouched off the Tundja with the idea that I could obtain a view of the Russian rear, in which I was not disappointed, for with my glasses I could see the road stretching away into Bulgaria proper, and could even distinguish the carts bringing up provisions and what must have been masses of soldiery. Guns of the calibre of even those days could have enfiladed that part of the road, but neither Suleiman nor his staff had ever thought of carefully examining the hills, or, what is quite likely, did not wish to. I had left my horse tied to a tree, to climb some rocks to obtain a better view, and was coming back, when I saw some ten or fifteen Circassians riding rapidly up the valley, and had no doubt they had seen me go up and were intending to rob me of what might be on me, and steal my horse. I had no time to lose. I jumped on Bayazid's back, and, at the risk of breaking my neck and his too, rode off along the rough rocks and amongst the scattered trees along the mountain. In a short time I came across some cleared forest, and here I let my horse go. Had he been bred in the Australian bush he could not have acquitted himself better, for he rattled along at a fair gallop, placing his feet with the accuracy of a goat,

and, though frequently stumbling, never actually coming down. We reached the bottom in safety, and here, of course, I felt in perfect security; in fact I never saw anything more of my friends the Circassians. But it was not all of us had such luck, for on one occasion some of these thieving irregulars stopped Scarborough, and though they left him his horse —too sorry a beast for even them to steal—still they cleared out his pockets, and, what was more important, relieved him also of his note-book and of an immense German sausage—the size of a small bolster—which he carried, wrapped up in linen, lashed across his saddle-bow.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SHIPKA BATTLES

Fighting in the Shipka—Extraordinary bravery of the Turk—Redjib Pasha—Disgraceful indifference of Turkish Generals—My reports reach home and Suleiman grows nasty—An irresponsible ruffian—I leave Turkey, and say goodbye to the reader.

AS the Turkish attacks on the Shipka Pass must always remain celebrated in the annals of war, a brief description of some of them may not be without interest. For five consecutive days—of which the following is an epitome—the Nizams—the Turkish regulars—were recklessly hurled against a position practically impregnable. But to understand that position it is necessary to give a short description of its topography.

Imagine the rocky crest of a mountain pass over which winds a good road, and—for the Russian position—the apex of the crest a strongly fortified situation, carrying heavy Krupp guns which can be trained down the pass, and itself defended by five other positions lower down placed on spurs which—radiating from the central position—touch the plain on the Tundja side, and are separated from each other by valleys from five hundred to four thousand feet deep, some thickly wooded, others rocky and almost inaccessible. But each of these spurs, though commanded by the central position is itself a fortress with guns of

heavy and light calibre, and further protected by rifle-pits. It will thus be seen that every one of these works must be carried simultaneously with the central one, or they remain untenable from the gunfire of each other and of the top. To the right of the Russians was a high peak, which completely dominated the Pass, and here the Turks, with incredible labour and great loss of life, had established some guns. But unfortunately their range was not great enough to reach all the enemy's batteries, or the battles that followed would never have been fought, whereas the heavier Russian guns easily reached this peak battery. To maintain this position was most arduous work for the Turks, for everything, including water, had to be carried up from below, the sides of the hills being so steep that not only had the guns and wagons to be moored to stakes driven into the interstices of the rocks, but that frequently an avalanche of stones would come hurtling down from above, not infrequently killing men who—climbing up with loads on their backs—were unable to get rapidly enough out of their track. I saw several men thus struck, when, leaving my horse at the foot of this deadly hill, I climbed up, often on hands and knees, to see what was going on on the top. And a curious spectacle it was. The crest of this hill resembled the back of a book standing on its two edges, forming a precipice on both sides. The Russian shells were knocking off the sharp ridge in large masses, sending the *débris* rolling down the Turkish side. And in face of this the Turks were getting guns into position. Marvellous work it was—intrepidity and cool indifference to death. For one after the other, as each man climbed to the crest, he was shot down or blown to atoms. Yet on they went, their method being to carry up stones, fill the crevices of the rocks, and make loopholes for the muzzles of the guns, which were dragged

up with ropes from below and placed on platforms made with rocks and stakes. Of course it was soon seen that these guns could do nothing to destroy the Russian positions, but they were valuable in protecting the assaulting columns of the Turks from counter-attacks on the Russian side, so that practically, until the Turks got close up to the lowest of the Russian positions, the flank was protected by their own guns on the peak.

Of the courage of the Ottoman troops it is impossible to speak too highly: properly led, they would conquer the world. But, unfortunately for them, they rarely are, and the Shipka was no exception. Not that their Generals lacked courage, for I think the bravest man I ever saw, either in war or peace, was Redjib Pasha, a quite young man who commanded at the peak. Lying in safety myself behind the breastwork of the battery, I often saw the Pasha stand up above the sky-line completely exposed, with shells and splinters of rock flying over his head. I could not detect the slightest change of feature in him or see him flinch, and any one who knows what it is to face a well-directed shell-fire will appreciate this. For the bravest unconsciously wince, and men—by no means cowards—instinctively crouch down. Redjib Pasha spoke French fairly well, and I remember shouting out to him that he ought to keep under cover, but he answered, "*Même un soldat Turque a besoin d'un bon example.*" From another hill I witnessed the first assault. A large force of Turks in a compact mass, clouds of Circassian and Bashi-bazouks hanging on their rear but keeping out of range, advanced up the road—which, as I said, is broad and good. Arrived at a bend of the road, the force divided, one part penetrating a ravine where they encountered a large force of Russians—which the Turks routed—and then rejoined the main column. It was

impossible to withhold admiration from the gallant way in which the Turks, though decimated by fire from above, advanced against the positions. But, alas! it was wasted valour, for when within some three hundred yards of their objective I saw a sudden halt and the whole column fall back, having lost, I believe, some twelve hundred men. But the Turks succeeded in holding their own lower down, and during the night threw up earthworks and remained there.

But this was not an isolated case of want of leading or of failure for want of reinforcements. There is not a shadow of doubt that if Suleiman had chosen he could have captured the entire Russian position that first day. But it did not suit his book to do so. As to the rest of his Generals, they all took their cue from him, for, whilst the blood of their soldiers was being spilt in aimless profusion on the hills, I frequently came across a batch of these dunder-headed Orientals lying ensconced behind an earthwork, or protected by some old Roman tumulus—of which there were many in the neighbourhood—smoking cigarettes and sipping coffee, looking at each other in that silent, phlegmatic stare, so peculiarly exasperating to a man of action, but so eminently characteristic of Orientals. I remember a typical instance of how battles were lost, when one day, having ridden down at a gallop with an orderly from the front to request that reinforcements might be sent up immediately, we came across just such a bevy, of whom two or three were most distinctly drunk. With great difficulty the General in command of that Division was finally got to grasp what was going on and what was wanted, when, fumbling in some unfathomable pocket in his trousers, which were tight to bursting, he produced a small piece of Indian ink, wrapped up in a rag, and after scrawling some unintelligible hieroglyphics on a piece of whitey-brown paper, in which food had been

wrapped, he proceeded to affix his seal to this precious document: first wetting his finger, then dabbing it on the Indian ink, then pressing it on this seal—which he fished out of some other pocket and picked at with a pin to get the dust out of the engraving. He then shouted loudly—for Ali or Osman or some other orderly—who spent half an hour trying to find his horse and another half-hour in an endeavour to grasp what was wanted of him, namely, that he should try to find the Commander-in-Chief to ask permission to send the reinforcement. But as no living soul was ever informed where Suleiman Pasha was going or what he was at, it took the orderly four hours to find him, when precisely the same writing process began again, so that it was close on six hours before the reinforcement began even to move up the hill. By this time, however, the Turks had been driven out of the position which they had taken with astonishing heroism and had been holding against immense odds.

"What does it matter!" said a Turkish Colonel to me when I spoke of this deadly dilatoriness. "Has not His Imperial Majesty thousands of Nizams, and do you think they will do their work less well to-morrow because they will have to step over the dead bodies of comrades?"

Day after day I witnessed these desperate assaults made with the wildest cheering and enthusiasm—and all for nothing, except to leave a thousand or so of them amongst the dead, their souls with Allah in Paradise, and the less fortunate wounded to crawl back as fast as they could—under cover of night—to such treatment as they might expect at the hands of a Turkish surgeon—to spin out their lives, sheared of an arm or leg, their pension pocketed by the Seraskier and his friends.

For a short time, on the third morning of these

assaults, it seemed that the Turks would really carry the Russian positions. Columns had been pushed up in the dark and a general assault began with the first streak of dawn. Nothing could exceed the valour of these men as they pressed on—their comrades falling by twenties and thirties on all sides of them. Still on they went, men swinging themselves up by the branches of trees and scrambling over difficult rocks—in face of a galling fire—and as I watched with my glass I could see that the foremost amongst these indomitable heroes were within a few yards of some of the enemy's earthworks. I saw a large body of Russian troops evacuate these places and fly precipitately up the hill, as if fearing to face the bayonets of men who seemed so indifferent to death. Loud above the incessant rattle of musketry and the scream of the shrapnel I could hear the wild shout of "Allah! Allah!"—and my heart seemed to stand still as if I were about to witness the decisive moment of an epoch-making victory. I cannot describe the exultation I felt: for, whatever one may think of the cause, it is the incidents of warfare which arouse one's enthusiasm or enlist one's sympathy. Victory was practically in their grasp—the history of the war hung in the balance, when lo! for some never explained reason, the Turks began to fall back, even though many of them were actually inside the Russian works and I could see them helping others over the fascines and gabions.

I never learnt the cause of this disastrous failure—whether treachery or simply from want of leaders—but be it what it may the entire mass of Turkish soldiers began to retire and in a short time—so near was I, though in a position of complete safety—I saw a Russian officer frantically waving his arms and cheering his men back into their own rifle-pits.

As night came on I rode down the hill and met the Ottoman troops. It was impossible not to feel the deepest sympathy for them. Fortunately, few knew how near had been their victory, or I think that even their stoical obedience would have given way—to wreak vengeance on the indolent—or traitorous—imbeciles who commanded them.

The day following this there was an entire cessation of hostilities, and I went over the ground where the fighting had been most severe. From the extraordinary way in which the trees and bushes had been cut to pieces by bullets and broken shell the wonder was any one ever came out alive of what must have been an awful fire. The surface of the ground was broken by hundreds of small mounds where the dead were buried, and so insufficiently had this been performed that here and there a hand or knee protruded above the earth-heaps, adding a ghastly aspect to the gloomy woods. Many dead, both Moslem and Christian—friends in death—lay side by side still unburied, their bodies already stripped by the Circassians—who were now to be seen everywhere—whilst occasionally, out of idle curiosity, some new-comer would lift the cloth—which the pious Mahommedan invariably threw over the faces of friend and foe alike—to discover their nationality. Groups of Turks—tired of digging—were sitting about smoking cigarettes, chatting and laughing with absolute unconcern, whilst others were collecting piles of rifles—over a thousand of Russian arms alone. I saw lying about numbers of Russian regimental caps and accoutrements, numbered 53, 54, 55, and 56, evidence to me that the Russians were steadily and systematically falsifying the return of their losses, invariably returning their dead as Bulgarian irregulars, in every case of a Russian defeat, in order to detract from the merit of their enemy, the Turks, in having gained a victory

over Russian regulars. But in every case of a Russian success, by some unknown process of metempsychosis, all alike became Russian regulars—precisely as we saw in Manchuria, where the Japanese, according to the latest official Russian reports of that war, never once encountered real Russian troops—but only hordes of ill-trained, half-savage Siberians. Ungenerous lying! and followed soon after by claiming as victories, battles which were simply routs. On the other hand, throughout the Russo-Turkish war I did not come across one single instance where the Turks had condescended to this paltry, ignoble form of falsehood. The Turk is rarely a liar.

* * * * *

But my time with the army of Suleiman was running short, for—as my letters to the *Times* of that date clearly show—I could not disguise my disgust or avoid hinting my suspicion of this incomparable scoundrel, Suleiman Pasha, who justly expiated his crimes by the bowstring not long after, when his treason was brought to light. My comments were telegraphed out to the Sublime Porte, and of course finally reached Suleiman's ears, when I received a request—tantamount to an order—to leave his army. I deliberated for some few days as to whether I would obey or whether I would refer the matter to our Ambassador. But I soon saw—indeed, it was practically borne in on me by an order from Suleiman—that I was not to be allowed to circulate in the army; and that it would be idle, if not dangerous, to remain. For Suleiman, who had not stuck at assassinating a Sultan or taking the life of his bosom friend and *protégé*, the Hungarian, whom I have before mentioned, would not have felt any compunction in arranging that so dangerous a foe as he considered me should disappear off his path. Nothing would have been easier

than to have had me knocked on the head by a Bashi-bazouk, who—even if he had been found out, which was extremely unlikely, as I constantly rode about alone in the wild parts of the hills—would have pleaded that he had taken me for a Russian spy. So I decided to leave, but before doing so I wrote a letter to Suleiman—which was very indiscreet, as I still was in the midst of his army and had many, many miles between me and any place out of his reach, such as Adrianople—in which I told him that I had been sent out by a newspaper, which could not be bought, to tell the truth of what I saw, however much it might displease a Marshal of Turkey or suit the political necessities of party in England or Turkey.

Moreover, my back being up, I determined not to let him think I was in the least concerned what he thought or what he might do; so, when ready to start—he having refused me an escort and left me to look after myself when travelling through the vast army of camp-followers and cut-throats which surrounded us—I rode up to his tent and told his A.D.C. I had come to say goodbye. But the Pasha practically declined to see me, by giving no answer to the A.D.C., and the last I saw of him was sitting cross-legged on the carpet of his tent, his filthy hands mechanically fingering a string of amber beads, his beard, matted and dirty, his coat unbuttoned, and no shoes on his feet. But, lying by his side, was a superb gold and jewelled sword lately sent him by that Sultan who, it was said, shivered whenever the name of the murderer of his uncle, Abdul Aziz, was mentioned.

* * * * *

I reached Constantinople without any adventure and here I found that there was an official order for me to quit the Sultan's territory, and, telegraphing home to Printing House Square, got instructions to go to Vienna.

Arriving there, I found the paper wished me to go to Plevna, but I debated in my mind whether it would be strictly loyal to many friends whom I had left behind—notably to the second in command of Suleiman's army, who had always supplied me with all the information he had about the resources of Turkey and concerning the affairs of the country. I saw at once that if anything did leak out, although myself perfectly innocent of giving information, my friends in Turkey would think I had been culpably indiscreet and that my enemies—and none sooner than Suleiman—would accuse me of treason. But what I think mainly decided me in declining to cross over to the Russian side was the importunity of the Russian Embassy and its emissaries, who literally besieged my hotel and bombarded me with questions of the very nature I could not disclose, and I saw that to be subjected to this for months and months, in daily and hourly contact with an army staff which would laugh at honourable scruples, would become intolerable, and that unless I sided with Russia entirely I should possibly be looked on by this staff as a Turkish spy. I need not refer to the rouble, for, of course, any one with the most elementary knowledge of things Russian will understand that this also came prominently into play. For the value of the *Times* opinion was always worth many thousands.

So I finally decided that, though so greatly against my own interest, I would return to England, which I did forthwith, and thus brought to a termination one of the most interesting portions of my life.

In closing these pages, however, I would wish to say that my life of activity by no means came to an end on my return home, for Fate brought me in contact with many of the makers of history and led my footsteps into many distant lands. Also, from these pages, I have

been compelled, for want of space, and out of consideration for the patience of my readers, to omit a long and, to me, singularly interesting journey through the less frequented parts of Syria, Moab, and the Hauran, undertaken entirely alone and—like the American who I met near Mar Saba—with a donkey carrying a few pots, my blanket and books, and practically with only a few piastres in my pocket.

It is possible I may relate the incidents of this trip, and other matters, in another work, and with that hope I take leave of my readers.

Τὸ Τέλος.

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